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The Beaver

CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

February | March 2006

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Sunday, February 26 at 12 pm ET/9 am PT to 6 pm ET/3 pm PT

Meet the lackeys of Adolf Hitler. Featuring never-before-seen footage from both government and private sources, rare photographs, documents and eyewitness testimony, "Hitler's Henchmen" tells the story of the six men who formed the inner circle of the Nazi regime, enforced its power and carried out the Holocaust.

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Spend Oscar weekend with a winning line-up of films. History Television rolls out the red carpet with six Academy Award®-winners including "Unforgiven," "Ghandi," "Dances with Wolves" and "Patton."

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Sunday, March 12 beginning at 8 pm ET/9 pm PT

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Monday, March 13 to Wednesday, March 15 beginning at 8 pm ET/9 pm PT

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The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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COVER: CORBIS

Let It Bleed

This is the third edition of *The Beaver* since significant design changes were introduced. It's gratifying that response from readers has been almost universally positive. We'd love to hear from you if we haven't already, though.

Canada's National History Society has invested in improvements over the past couple of years. They include additional pages, full colour, more editorial staff and more money for content. The changes peaked with the 85th anniversary edition in October, but it has been an evolution. And evolution, by definition, continues.

The new design, while fully introduced three editions ago, had developed ever since the History Society hired Michel Groleau in January 2005 as art director. Michel's mandate was to develop a new design by fall. The magazine's look improved steadily. As one of our contributors commented, "Boy, has the old *Beaver* ever smartened up."

THOMAS FRICKE

That's not to denigrate the venerable magazine's previous incarnations. But to repeat an analogy I used in the anniversary edition, a birthday is a fine time for a new suit. A history magazine needn't look like an artifact, and *The Beaver* deserved a modern look.

Among the kudos received was this from Peter C. Newman, who knows something of Canada's history and the challenges and joys of writing about it.

"I live in England now and have only just had a chance to read your magnificent anniversary issue. It is splendid and history-making. I genuinely do not believe that The Beaver *has ever bled a picture since it started to publish by bush telegraph. Your art director should immediately receive the Order of Canada for his daring and imagination …*

"Congratulations, and long may you bleed…"

(Bleeding means running the image to the edges of the page.)

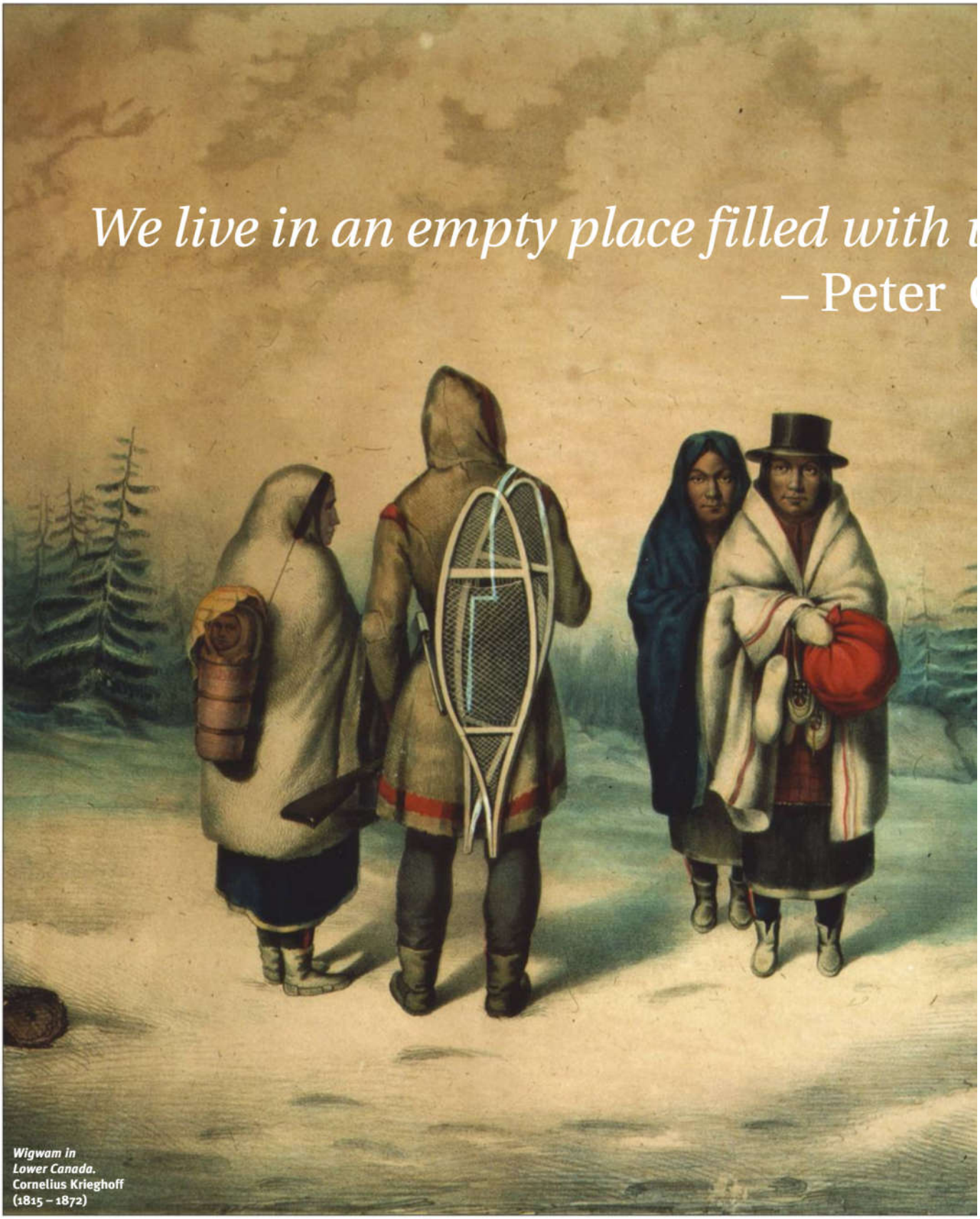
We hope you'll enjoy Michel's beautiful work in this issue, but that you will also see that we remain true to the magazine's heritage. Features include an exploration of the personalities behind a 17th-century sailing adventure in Hudson Bay, the 19th-century life of Canada's first novelist, the Canadian connection behind Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the 100th anniversary of Canada's Alpine Club.

One of our objectives is to show how past connects to present. That's reflected in columnist Christopher Moore's excellent piece exploring Canada's relationship with its Chinese immigrants. Chris looks at of the infamous anti-Chinese "head tax," ambivalent views on immigration and how today's focus on the rise of China's economy echoes discussions from 120 years ago.

Michel Groleau worked from our Winnipeg offices for the several months of intense redesign effort. He will now be working from what History Society CEO Deborah Morrison calls "our Quebec bureau," his home in Montreal, and travelling periodically to Winnipeg. It's great that a national magazine can have staff in different parts of the country, and we look forward to Michel continuing to pursue his Order of Canada working on behalf of *The Beaver* and our readers.

We welcome your comments – whether you agree with Newman or not.

Murdoch Davis
Editor
editors@historysociety.ca



Wigwam in Lower Canada.
Cornelius Krieghoff (1815 – 1872)

MCCORD MUSEUM OF CANADIAN HISTORY / CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF / M19893

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Letters

Silk trains (and sow's...)

It was with great interest and nostalgia that I read and re-read Graham Chandler's article on the silk train. ["Canada's Silk Road," Dec. 2005/Jan. 2006]. Growing up in Port Arthur, Ont., the CPR was a very important part of our lives, for it brought our mail, food, visitors, purchases from the Eaton's catalogue, etc. etc. But most of all it brought fascination, awe and wonder to a child, to hear that steam whistle knowing that in a few moments the silk train would come roaring through at full throttle.

The big black steam engine had two white flags on top and has remained pictured in my mind all those years. We were told as kids that the little silkworms were spinning the silk as the huge train roared by. The trains are gone but the memories remain, so thank you for a most interesting article.

BILL TANNER
PEACHLAND, B.C.

Graham Chandler's article on the CPR's high-speed silk transport is quite authentic and well illustrated. The wide-skirted, streamlined and high-drivered (fast) Hudson locomotives (2800 series) may indeed have been useful in the final stages of the silk-transport era of the mid to late 1930s. However, the front cover illustration of a similarly streamlined but enormously more powerful Selkirk locomotive is a bit perplexing. The article states that the special silk trains were discontinued after 1933 and silk car shipments virtually finished by 1940. The streamlined Selkirks (5920 series) were apparently not commonly in service until after that date (suggested by D.C. Lewis's *Canadian Pacific Steam Locomotives*, 1984). Was that not a long time after silk trains were large enough to justify hauling by such a powerful, relatively low-drivered (and hence slower) machine?

ED BOUSFIELD
OTTAWA, ONT.

Pardonnez-nous

I enjoy your magazine. I especially enjoy that there are topics about the French part of the history of our nation and that the names of people or places in French are printed accurately, with accents. However, in the December issue, I found two items rather disrespectful.

Your introductory page art carries the quote, "My country is not a country, it's winter." Gilles Vigneault said: "Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver." As a quote, it should have appeared in French because it is part of French-Canadian folklore. The English translation could have followed. As presented, the French-Canadian origin of it is ignored and an occasion is missed to educate (or remind) your readers about the existence and originality of French-language culture in Canada. (Also, the reference at the bottom of the painting should read "Lévis." That city has a French name.)

In the tribute to Victoria Cross winner Paul Triquet we read that he "enlisted with the Royal 22nd (also known as the Van Doos)." Growing up in Québec, the city, I have always known that the regiment was referred to as "le vingt-deux" or "le vingt-deuxième" (French for 22 and 22nd). I can only speculate that "Van Doos" was invented to make something French look and sound more English and I find it culturally disrespectful.

I was born in Québec but have lived in "English Canada" for the past 30 years. I have travelled our country from coast to coast; I have visited historic sites of French importance and met French-speaking Canadians in every province. However, I still meet people who tell me that French is irrelevant, of no value, of no significance.

I guess we (French Canadians) have become invisible because of occurrences like the ones I mentioned above: when names or expressions are not acknowledged in French, intentionally or not, the English take the credit for everything, leaving the French feeling cheated and disrespected.

DIANE SANTERRE
OTTAWA, ONT.

Names and faces

The Beaver carried an interesting article about efforts to identify people in the native photos [Oct./Nov. 2005, Currents]. I am glad that some of the vast photographic collection at Library and Archives Canada are being identified in the manner being pursued by and promoted by Murray Angus.

Are the source fonds from the Geological Survey of Canada's former holdings? Having seen some of the original images as generated from glass plates while working for the GSC, I can attest that they are an incredible resource for ethnologists. They may also be in need of the family identification pursued by Mr. Angus if they have not already been reviewed. Similarly, has the Notman Collection been canvassed? Photographers represented in that collection were on some of the very first surveys of Western Canada and the Arctic, and their collection may have images simply identified with appellations such as "Indian(s)" or "Eskimo(s)." Similarly, are the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Manitoba willing to participate in this project?

Another data source is the Department of National Defence's archived photographs. The number of veterans is diminishing, as is the chance to better identify pictures within this fond – not just people, but places and what is going on in a photograph.

Finally, I was wondering whether *The Beaver* could pursue a similar project with its own archival materials? The Oct./Nov. 2005 issue is devoted to a retrospective of the magazine's publishing accomplishments, and I noted several

covers that illustrated Inuit while other separate images of Inuit appear on pages 19, 20 and 23.

ROBERT D. HAMILTON, M.L.I.S.
ARCHIVIST
THE WOODBRIDGE COMPANY LIMITED
TORONTO, ONT.

Left...left...left...

In the Oct./Nov. 2003 issue you used a reproduction of *The Second Battle of Ypres* by Richard Jacks to accompany an article on Sam Hughes. I was obliged to point out (and *The Beaver* acknowledged in the issue that followed) that the painting was printed in reverse, thus rendering our soldiers "left handed."

You've done it again in the Dec. 2005/Jan. 2006 issue in the article: "A Letter from Ypres"! The detail from the same Jacks painting is reversed. When I saw it I began to wonder if it wasn't me, that those infantrymen were indeed lefties. But no, I know the painting.

MICHAEL MONTCOMBROUX
INWOOD, MAN.

A bonus for us, too

Congratulations on the recent *Beaver*! I started with the inspiring "Moment" re: *In Flanders Fields*, followed by a review of George Grant's *Lament for a Nation*. Turning the page, my mind was lit up by "Canada's Silk Road." Reading further, "For Valour," then "A Letter from Ypres" reminded me of the saying that "the stars only appear when it's dark." "The Changing Face of the Governor General" was a bonus. I hope every school child in Canada has the opportunity to read this *Beaver*.

G. JAMES THOMSON
OAKVILLE, ONT.

A voice of dissent

Why has the art director succumbed to a limp imitation of the crass and "popular" American mags found in supermarket checkouts? Complete with a cute little "Win a Trip for Two" seal on the front cover? I'm quite disappointed in your "new look" for the old and venerable magazine *The Beaver*.

Good graphic design and the graphic presentation of the immensely important historical information, stories and anecdotes illustrated in a magazine of *The Beaver*'s stature are extremely important, just as important as the history you provide. In the same way you wouldn't knowingly mislead your readers with inaccurate information, please don't burn our eyes and insult our intelligence with this cheap "art department desktop publishing." You have the power and readership to support you in a decision to truly make this magazine great in both content and presentation. We can learn from our own history, we don't need to mimic the tabloids. An appropriate response to the need for a new look would be to research the history of *The Beaver*, study the editions of the past and search for clues to a new meaningful concept, one which should last for at least the next 10 years and we all would be proud to have in our office and home.

It is never too late for good design.

MURRAY R. WILSON
WINNIPEG, MAN.

More digging on Miner

I was just wondering, after reading the article on Bill Miner [Dec. 2005/Jan. 2006], after his final "escape," what happened to the securities and bonds? There was no mention of them being turned in or cashed. Anyone ever check?

Great magazine.

LLOYD SWEET
SAULT STE. MARIE, ONT.

When Australian corporate bonds are stolen then that company must keep the debt on its books until the bonds are produced for payment. Historians should be looking at the company records to see if and when the bonds were paid off and who or what entity got the cheque.

CHRIS SHELTON
VANCOUVER, B.C.

The Beaver **welcomes readers' comments.** E-mail us at editors@historysociety.ca or write to *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

LE PRIX PIERRE BERTON AWARD

THE PIERRE BERTON AWARD
2006
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Canada's National History Society established an award in 1994 for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. Canadian author Pierre Berton, the first recipient, agreed to have his name associated with the award in subsequent years. Other recipients of the Award are:

James H. Gray, Calgary, 1995
Jacques Lacoursière, Quebec City, 1996
The CRB Foundation , Montreal, 1997
Bob Johnstone, Toronto, 1998
(no award in 1999)
Peter C. Newman, British Columbia, 2000
CBC/Radio-Canada, for *Canada: A People's History*, 2001
The Canadian Society for Civil Engineering, 2002
Charlotte Gray, Ottawa, 2003
Jack Granatstein, Toronto, 2004
Will Ferguson, Calgary, 2005

Individuals or organizations may be nominated whose work has brought Canadian history to a national audience through such means as publications, film, radio, television, theatre or the web in either official language.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2006 Pierre Berton Award. In addition to the name and address of the nominee, nominations must be accompanied by detailed information in support of the candidate. A biography or curriculum vitae, newspaper or magazine articles or letters of support outlining the achievements of the nominee would be welcome. There is no nomination form.

Nominations for the 2006 Pierre Berton Award must be received by April 28, 2006, and should be sent to:

THE PIERRE BERTON AWARD
CANADA'S NATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY
478–167 Lombard Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T6

CANADA'S HISTORY SOCIETY

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e-mail: prixbertonaward@historysociety.ca

Currents

Heritage

DANNY HENNIGER

Money Pit area, 1952

Nova Scotia's treasure island

Treasure hunters from around the world have been caught up in the mystery of Oak Island ever since Nova Scotian Donald Daniel McInnis discovered a deep hole – known as the "Money Pit" – on the uninhabited island in 1795. Over the years, adventurers have searched Oak Island, uncovering strange wooden structures and stone drains buried beneath a beach, Spanish shoes and scissors, among other objects. In 1971 images taken with an underwater camera reportedly showed tools, a treasure chest and human remains. Still, skeptics have claimed the mystery is either a grand hoax or has a natural explanation.

Today the scene at Oak Island is pastoral; treasure hunting has ceased for now. Both in their early 80s, treasure hunter and American ex-pat Dan Blankenship and Montrealer David Tobias put their share of Oak Island (78 percent) up for sale. Co-owners for almost 40 years, they wish to see new treasure hunters take up the search. However, locals have pressured the provincial government to buy the island, citing its cultural and historical importance. Developers have also been threatening to take up the rope in this island tug-of-war.

Having been closed to the public for the past 10 years, some say the treasure of Oak Island lies in anticipated tourism dollars. Others insist it is the home of an enormous treasure that has yet to be found. Either way, it's a part of our collective heritage, a true Canadian mystery.

–Danny Hennigar

Goodbye to a ghost town

It was quiet in the Ontario "town with the silver lining," when Cobalt's precious metal became difficult to mine. The town grew out of a 1903 silver find that would have taken even the most seasoned Klondike gold rushers by surprise. Now, just over a century after the first silver claim was staked there, the town is shining a headlamp on its past. The first of a four-stage plan for historic rejuvenation to increase tourism has just been completed.

Doug Shearer of the Historic Cobalt Mining Camp Project states they are not trying to "pretty up" the town, but rather protecting and promoting the "rough experience that was Cobalt" when it "exploded out of the bush in six years."

A mobile exhibit, called the Great Canadian Mine Show, will utilize virtual reality, robotics, digital animation and simulations to take the visitor through the different stages of mining.

Over the winter of 2006 the process of reviewing the endless supply of photographs documenting the town's mining era begins. There is already excitement surrounding some of the findings in the vast collection. As rumour has it, three prime ministers – Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Robert Borden and William Lyon Mackenzie King – were photographed at the 1911 town hall dedication.

COBALT MUSEUM

Cobalt train station, 1905

Cobalt's prosperity didn't just stay in the community. It infiltrated Canadian society, its wealth helping to finance other mining towns, including Kirkland Lake. The town's "high stakes" also contributed to the development of the NHL (it had the first northern hockey team in the NHA – forerunner to the NHL). Cobalt is also credited with saving Ontario from near bankruptcy, developing Toronto as a financial centre and providing the impetus for the creation of mining and prospecting legislation. The history of Cobalt runs much deeper then surface mining, and will surely last longer than its "ghosts."

–Pat Kerr

TAKE the day off

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

Feb. 16: To note the incorporation 125 years ago of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Polish a spike.

Elaine Goble

COLIN ROWE

Living History

Artist

Waiting in line at the convenience store got you down? Take some time to observe the coins clutched in your hand. In particular, take a close look at the new 25-cent coin in circulation.

On Oct. 17, 2005, the Royal Canadian Mint unveiled two commemorative coins to salute the Year of the Veteran. Designed by Ottawa-based artist Elaine Goble, both the 25-cent coin and the 10-dollar coin depict the profiles of two veterans from different generations joined by love for their country.

Goble was born in St. Thomas, Ont., and studied art at York University and the University of Western Ontario. She works largely around the theme of "Canadian achievers," people she believes are "ordinary neighbours leading extraordinary lives." In 1995 Goble created her first war-related work, depicting six veterans at a Remembrance Day service. With a direct and honest approach, she has since painted 17 portraits of veterans, exploring the physical and mental price paid by war survivors.

Reflecting on Canadian veterans, Goble recalls the words of a woman whose father served in World War I: "You cannot be angry when you are grateful." Goble feels that these words apply to every veteran she has portrayed: "Although their experience of war may have been fraught with danger, injury, violence or loss, invariably they all have expressed gratitude to be alive, a fierce love of country and a great sense of loyalty and belonging." While the task of designing a coin was daunting, Goble also found it exhilarating: "I cannot think of a more challenging or honourable mandate that an artist could be given."

Up to this point, Goble has shied away from the till: "My family and I have given away many quarters to family and friends; however, I have never exchanged one over the counter as of yet."

For more information visit www.mint.ca/veteran/home.asp

ON THE Web

www.furtradestories.ca

Let your fingers lead you through Canada's early wilderness, in Canada's National History Society's new website. Our fur trade history is richly and authentically presented, bringing multiple perspectives – aboriginal, English, and French – to the armchair explorer with never-before-seen audio, visual and textual materials. Fully bilingual: www.fourrureetcommerce.ca

www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/020110_e.html

Separation and servitude. During the Industrial Revolution, many British children were placed in the care of "charitable" societies. Believing emigration to be the answer, more than 100,000 children were sent to Canada. Their descendants can trace their "orphaned" ancestors through original passenger lists held by the National Archives of Canada.

http://collections.ic.gc.ca/ghost/contents.html

Fur trading, gold digging and exploration. There's never a dull moment on the Province of British Columbia's website, which combines personal anecdotes, archival documents and traditional music to portray the wild and wily characters of the northwest coast.

Mar. 11: To mark the appointment 250 years ago of Montcalm as the commander "in the field" of French forces in New France. Cry wolf(e).

Mar. 12: To celebrate the day in 1966 that Bobby Hull became the first NHL player to score more than 50 goals in a season. Give someone a 7-minute standing ovation.

Currents

Our home & native...

Horse

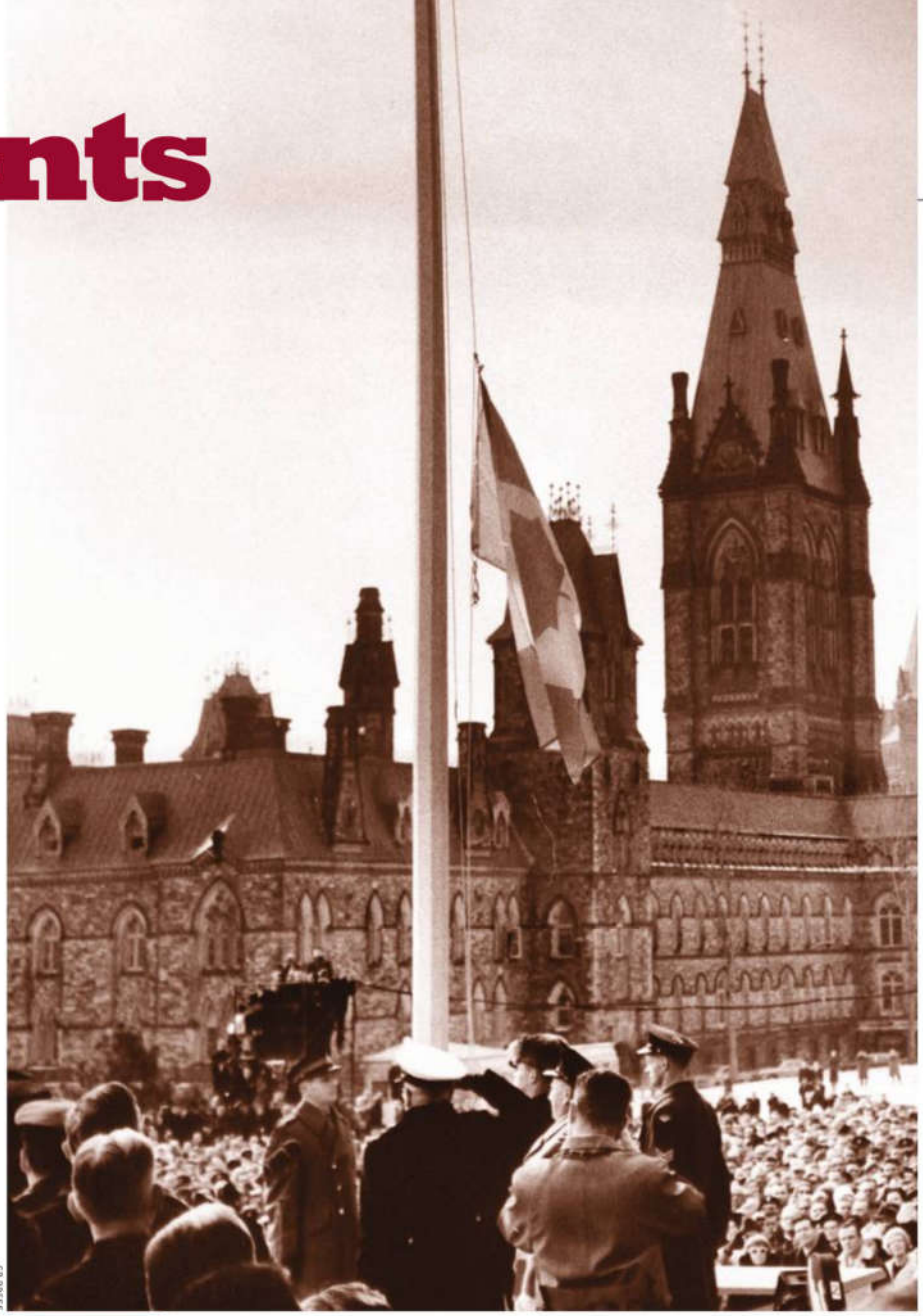
So often, when history gives a nod to the country's early settlers, the contribution of another kind of settler is unacknowledged: the newcommers' animals. Canada's distinct breed of horse is one such pioneer. This breed has a royal lineage, sent by King Louis XIV to the New World in the late 1600s.

In Canada, they were highly prized for plowing and valued for their fortitude and ability to thrive with food restrictions. Over hundreds of years, they evolved under difficult conditions, including harsh weather, food scarcity and hard work. As a result, the Canadian Horse is one of the sturdiest horse breeds in the country.

They numbered about 150,000 in the mid-1800s. When farm machinery became mechanized the breed dwindled to 400. Thereafter, Canada's national breed was formally recognized, and efforts were made to revive it. Today the population hovers at 2,500.

MARCH 1934 in The Beaver

In a message to ex-Scouts serving the HBC, Robert Stephenson Smyth, Lord Baden-Powell, founder of Boy Scouts, writes: "You fellows up there on the far off frontier of the Empire, living a man's life of hard fare and hard work, are the admiration of your brothers at home. You are heroes to them, and what you do and say they like to imitate. ... You are showing an example which travels far and influences for good a large number ... in more civilized parts of the world."



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Moment

Feb. 15, 1965: The Canadian flag is raised for the first time

A large shivering crowd, many members of which must have slipped out from their offices, has been waiting patiently on Parliament Hill's snow-covered lawn. Moments earlier in the Hall of Honour, invitees listened to a man who'd fought long and hard to see this day. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's uncommonly emotive speech ended with: "Under this Flag may our youth find new inspiration for the loyalty to Canada; for patriotism based not on any mean or narrow nationalism, but on the deep and equal pride that all Canadians will feel for every part of this good land. God bless our Flag! And God bless Canada!" Now, the crowd watches as dignitaries join them outside, planting themselves in front of the Peace Tower. The Red Ensign is officially lowered for the last time and folded with careful precision

by members of the Canadian Armed Forces. With a quick hoist from RCMP Constable Joseph Secours, the official national flag reaches the top of the flagpole with a dramatic ripple; a surge of patriotism is palpable as the sun breaks through the clouds. All over the country and beyond, flag raisings are honouring the new Canadian flag.

If they're right about 40 being the new 30, then our flapping Maple Leaf has merely crossed the threshold to adulthood. The Canadian flag celebrates its 41st anniversary this February. Whether it's flown at hockey games, during parades, or proudly atop a flagpole, the iconic red-and-white banner represents our connectedness to our nation, offering a sense of belonging in a geographically and culturally diverse land. While our flag remains our most cherished symbol as Canadians, its early stitching was quite tangled.

Without a flag for the country, the search for an official design gained momentum in 1925, when a Privy Council committee was formed. Still, the effort fizzled out as quickly as it began. Twenty years later, following a flush of national pride after World War II, another committee was formed with the mandate to "consider and report upon a suitable design" for "a distinctive national flag." By approaching the public for new designs, a floodgate was opened. With more than 2,600 designs put forward, proud Canadians seized the opportunity to unleash their artistic sides. Still, the process meandered, and the committee recommendation to adopt a modified version of the hotly debated Red Ensign didn't fly – literally. The issue was left blowing in the wind for another 20 years, punctuated by spotty debate and stalemates over the "flag question." But a sense of urgency was mounting.

In the early 1960s, under the minority Liberal government of Lester B. Pearson, the debate intensified, morphing into a political crusade. The decision to officially adopt a national Canadian flag was raised – again. But how would this new search differ from the others? The Flag Debate of 1964 was mired in controversy, as the attempt to choose a unifying symbol pitted Pearson against the leader of the Opposition, John Diefenbaker. Beyond Ottawa, the debate destabilized the nation by reinforcing divided loyalties.

A 1963 flag competition run jointly by *Canadian Art* and *Weekend Magazine* foreshadowed our eventual pick – but amusingly, the maple leaf design came in second. The winner was an uncompromisingly abstract design; the runner-up, created by James Sanders, was a red maple leaf on a field of white. But the flag debate dragged on. When Diefenbaker demanded a referendum be held to select a flag design, Pearson flagrantly opted to form yet another committee (albeit an elected, multi-party one). In October 1964, after eliminating various proposals, three possible designs remained: a Red Ensign with the Union Jack that showed the shield of the arms of Canada, a design sporting three red maple leaves closed in by blue bars, and a flag with a single red maple leaf on a white field framed by two red bars.

After much political jostling and rounds of speeches that nearly brought governing to a standstill, the committee reached a decision. Our current design was adopted unanimously on Oct. 29, 1964. Creator George F.G. Stanley was inspired by the flag of the Royal Military College of Canada, in Kingston, Ontario (where he presided as the Dean of Arts). Stanley's rationale was as modest as his design: "The single leaf has the virtue of simplicity; it emphasizes the distinctive Canadian symbol and suggests the idea of loyalty to a single country." Canadians were quick to embrace the new flag and it didn't take long to become official. On Dec. 15, 1964 the flag was adopted by the House of Commons; it was approved by the Senate two days later. Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed it on Jan. 28, 1965 and it was inaugurated on Feb. 15 that same year. Since 1996, Feb. 15 has been commemorated as National Flag of Canada Day.

Calendar
Feb/March 06

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION

QUEBEC

Lace Up –
Canada's Passion for Skating

The history of ice hockey, speed skating and figure skating are explored with 200 artifacts, including historic skates, prints, costumes and decorative objects.

Jan. 27, 2006 to March 4, 2006
Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau
(819) 776-7000 www.civilization.ca

ONTARIO

A Sister is Born –
Mary Christie Geills McCrae

Tells the story of John McCrae's younger sister, who was active in the Women's Missionary Society Council. Her brother is best known, for writing the famous World War I poem *In Flanders Fields*.

Until April 30, 2006
McCrae House, Guelph
(519) 836-1221
www.guelpharts.ca/mccraehouse

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

From the Hands of a Master: Tradition Revealed by Contemporary Artisans

This exhibition pays tribute to artisans' work presented on eight postage stamps issued by Canada Post – each one representing different crafts.

Until April 9, 2006
The Acadian Museum of P.E.I., Miscouche
(902) 432-2880 www.gov.pe.ca

Currents

Oldways

Notes from the sickroom

MANAGEMENT OF THE SICK ROOM, AND DUTIES OF ATTENDANTS

From *Rules for checking the spread of contagious diseases*
by Provincial Board of Health
of Ontario, 1885-1893

The sick room, in cases of infectious disease, should always be in an upper storey, if there is more than one storey. It should be large, having an air space of at least 1,000 cubic feet for each individual, and the air of the room should be frequently changed – at least three times per head per hour. In summer the supply should be unlimited; windows being thrown open, and draughts on the patient prevented, some device being employed, if necessary such as a fine gauze or wire netting, slanting from the top of the sash to within two inches of the ceiling. If there be a fire place or any flues they should be utilized for purposes of ventilation. The room should be cleared of all needless clothing, carpets, stuffed furniture, drapery, or other material liable to harbour the germs of disease. Inexpensive bedding should be used and destroyed on the termination of the case.

THE SICK BED, H. LESSING

Persons should avoid all exposure, direct or indirect, to special contagion; and no person or thing should be allowed to come direct from a case of infectious disease, unless previously disinfected under competent supervision.

This grand plan for Calgary was never brought to fruition, but serves as evidence of a time when anything was possible.

Paper Trail

Calgary Beautiful

Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861–1933) was an English landscape architect and town planner, who began his career as a garden designer. An influential and eloquent proponent of the City Beautiful Movement (devoted to the creation of attractive cities for the purpose of inspiring inhabitants to moral and civic virtue) he made four North American tours, promoting town-planning schemes for a number of Canadian sites and cities. Mawson developed "master plans" for Regina, the University of Saskatchewan and Stanley Park in Vancouver.

One of Mawson's most ambitious projects was his plan for a quickly growing Prairie city. On Jan. 8, 1913, Mawson was commissioned by the City of Calgary to design a plan for the city's future development. It was a time of hope and innovation; Calgary had grown dramatically since 1905, both in population and physical size.

In 1914, Mawson published *Calgary: A Preliminary Scheme for Controlling the Growth of the City*. An elaborate concept, the scheme eventually became known as "Vienna on the Bow." The image shown here, titled "The Civic Centre of Calgary as It May Appear Many Years Hence," was one of 30 drawings prepared for the presentation of Mawson's plan to the city. But Mawson's brainchild would never be realized.

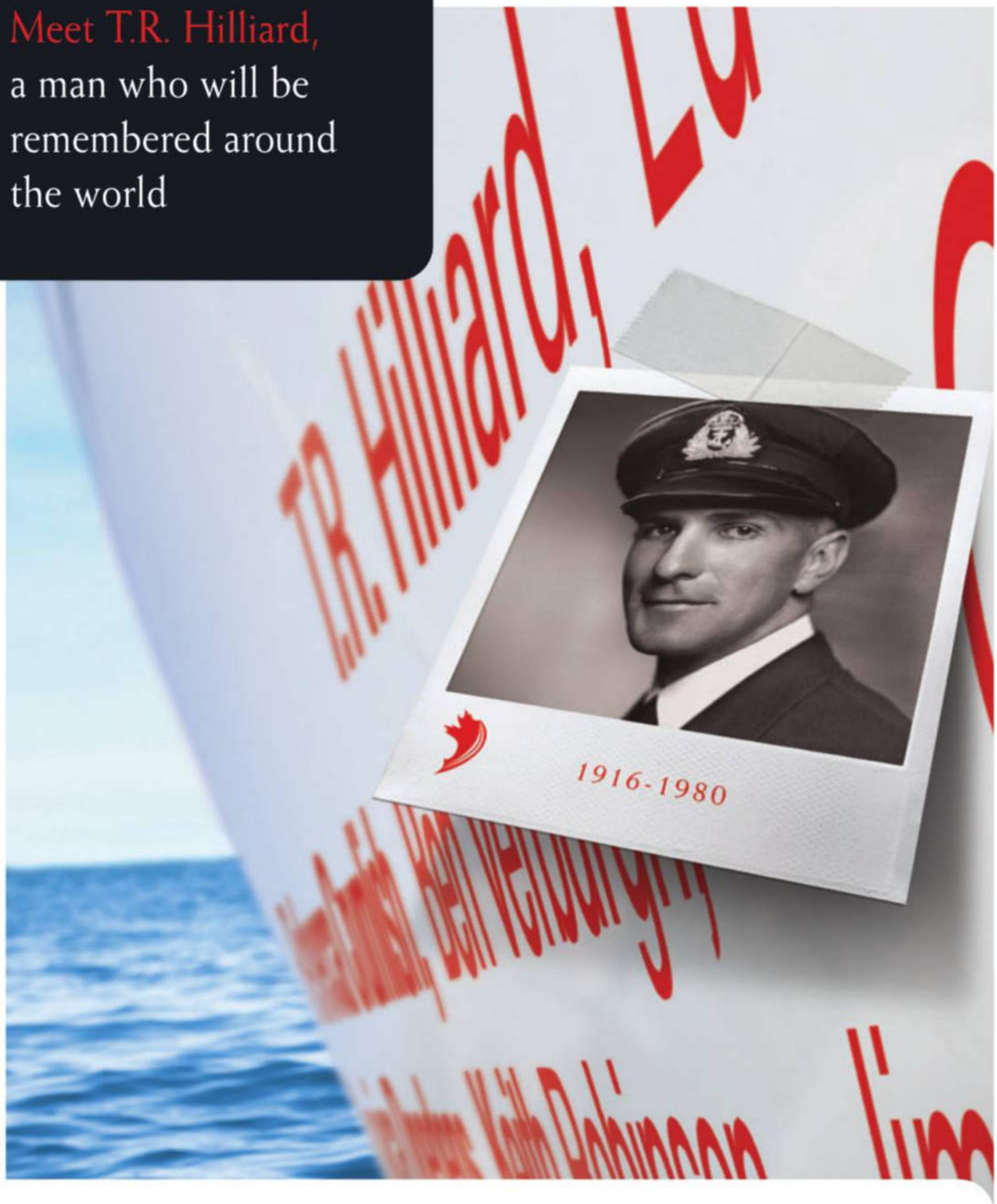
Just months earlier, in the summer of 1913, a depression had hit western Canada. Construction on many Calgary projects, including Mawson's, was stalled. With the outbreak of World War I the following year, city planning again took a back seat. When the war ended, the optimism that accompanied Calgary's boom seemed inappropriate and the Mawson plan was shelved.

In the 1930s, Mawson's drawings were left as unclaimed freight at a Calgary train station. A CPR employee used them to insulate his garage in Sunnyside, an area of northwest Calgary. Discovered during the garage's demolition in 1976, they were restored and now reside at the Canadian Architectural Archives at the University of Calgary Library.

Our thanks to Linda Fraser, curator, Canadian Architectural Archives, who provided the information.

THOMAS MAWSON FONDS, CANADIAN ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY LIBRARY

Meet T.R. Hilliard,
a man who will be remembered around the world



The family of the late Canadian Naval Lieutenant Thomas Richard Hilliard is dedicated to keeping his memory alive. That's why they had his name inscribed on the hull of Spirit of Canada - our entry in the 2006 5-Oceans Solo Sailing Race. A few months from now, T.R Hilliard's will be one of the estimated 10,000 names travelling around the world, inspiring skipper Derek Hatfield as he takes on the world's best solo sailors in one of the world's toughest challenges.

Join the adventure. www.spiritofcanada.net

Explorations

Patrice A. Dutil on

Canada's Commissions of Inquiry

How does this thing work, anyway? Justice Gomery takes yet another look at the inner workings of the Canadian government.

In September 2004, a few months after he had received his commission to conduct an inquiry into the "Sponsorship Program and the Advertising Activities" of the Government of Canada, Justice John Howard Gomery opened his hearings in Ottawa.

There was an interesting symbolism in the location chosen for these first proceedings, the Bytown Pavilion on Sussex Drive. The Pavilion sits, rather isolated, about midway between the prime minister's residence and the mass of government administration offices in downtown Ottawa. A nice coincidence, it positioned Justice Gomery well as he began to unravel the relationship between the two.

The relationship between politicians and the machinery of state has long been an obsession in Canada. Often, prime ministers have resorted to creating royal commissions to fix the "vicious cycle" of patronage. Commissions have proven a handy method to distance government during political turbulence, but more importantly, commissions have proposed effective solutions. They have become part of our political learning process – examining trends in Canada and, at times, comparing them with ideals and practices outside the country.

Many commissions, whether provincial or federal, have been triggered by actual or perceived failures in public administration. There have been dozens since 1867 on issues as varied as "The Alleged Malfeasance of the Officials of the Yukon Territory" (1899), "The Quebec Bridge" (1907), "Certain Disturbances at the Kingston Penitentiary During April 1971" (1973) and "Certain Activities of the RCMP" (1984). More recently, the Canadian government called for inquiries to examine the role of government in grave crises, such as the "The Blood System in Canada" (1995) which examined how the government's machinery broke down. In all cases, the role of government and the management of public servants has been a main focus of inquiry.

In his first report Nov. 1, 2005, Justice Gomery called the Sponsorship Program "a depressing story of multiple failures to plan a government program appropriately and to control waste – a story of greed, venality and misconduct."

Moving even closer to the core, it seems that in every generation the Canadian government invites commissions to take a hard look at its internal operations. John A. Macdonald created the first royal commission in 1868 to investigate conditions within the civil service of the new country. It found significant discrepancies in record keeping.

Macdonald would trigger two more inquiries while in power, culminating in a "Royal Commission into the Present Condition of the Civil Service in Ottawa" in 1891. A year later, its report underlined the corrosive issue of political patronage. This concern, and its links with inefficiency and waste, would animate debates about public administration and politics to this day.

Following scandals that eventually led to the suspensions of three civil servants and the resignation of the deputy minister of Marine and Fisheries, Wilfrid Laurier initiated a "Royal Commission to Enquire and Report upon the Operation of the Civil Service Act" in 1907. It recommended the creation of a civil service commission to help eradicate patronage and build a neutral, efficient public service. That was implemented in 1908. Mackenzie King would seek the advice of two more royal commissions, the "Royal Com-

CP PHOTO

mission of Canadian Broadcasting" (1929) and the 1946 Kellock-Taschereau commission investigating leaks of confidential information among public servants, recently named one Canada's most important works by the Literary Review of Canada.

Frustrated by his experience with Ottawa's bureaucracy John Diefenbaker created a "Royal Commission on Government Organization," headed by J. Grant Glassco, to recommend changes that would "promote efficiency, economy and improved service in the dispatch of public business." It reported in 1963 that a wide range of reforms was in order, especially regarding central agencies such as the Privy Council Office and Ministry of Finance. It also advised that government had to enhance the system's flexibility by allowing public service managers more discretion in applying policy and services. The government responded positively to the recommendations and gradually central agencies started focusing on long-term issues, leaving the operation of ordinary functions of government to the departmental experts.

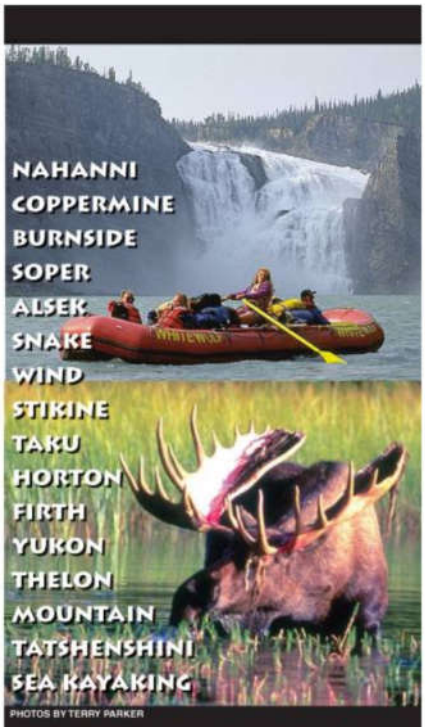
However, the idea of "letting managers manage" fell on hard times. While the Pearson and Trudeau governments allowed more discretion, the philosophy was never truly implemented. As expenses spiralled in the 1970s to the point where the auditor general had to declare that the government had lost control of its purse, Trudeau appointed a "Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability," led by Allan Lambert, president and chairman of the Toronto Dominion Bank. The Lambert Commission made significant observations. Government management was not effective, it found, because of "an almost total breakdown in the chain of accountability."

Issues around record keeping, patronage, corruption and accountability have consistently been at the heart of Canada's commissions of inquiry. It was this chain of factors that Justice Gomery sought to understand as he began his hearings in the autumn of 2004. Did this misconduct reveal deeper problems?

As Gomery started the first phase of his hearings he called on public servants from various departments to illuminate what really happens behind closed doors. He learned how the public service negotiates among political directives, established practices, rules of law and the necessities of accountability. It became clear that many people knew things were going wrong but just as many people feared that nothing could be done. It took a whistleblower to pry open the cover and show the world that a bureaucracy that had been highjacked was misspending public funds.

How can the system be fixed? Justice Gomery has already promised that his final thoughts will "reshape public management for years." His first report last November identified "who is responsible," now it appears that he aims to go far beyond the issues thrown up by the management of the sponsorship program. As Gomery and his team prepare for the publication of their recommendations, it is worth remembering that royal commissions have rarely been able to effect significant transformations in the management of the public sector. Inevitably, by the time they publish their final thoughts, government has already changed procedures because its executives have found a better way to operate, or because the cabinet has ordered change. Only time will tell whether government will implement the changes Gomery prescribes. Judging from the rich history of commissions past, the odds are against him.

Patrice A. Dutil is Director of Research at the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. He is the author of *Devil's Advocate: Godfroy Langlois and the Politics of Liberal Progressivism in Laurier's Quebec* and was the founder and first editor of the *Literary Review of Canada*.



PHOTOS BY TERRY PARKER

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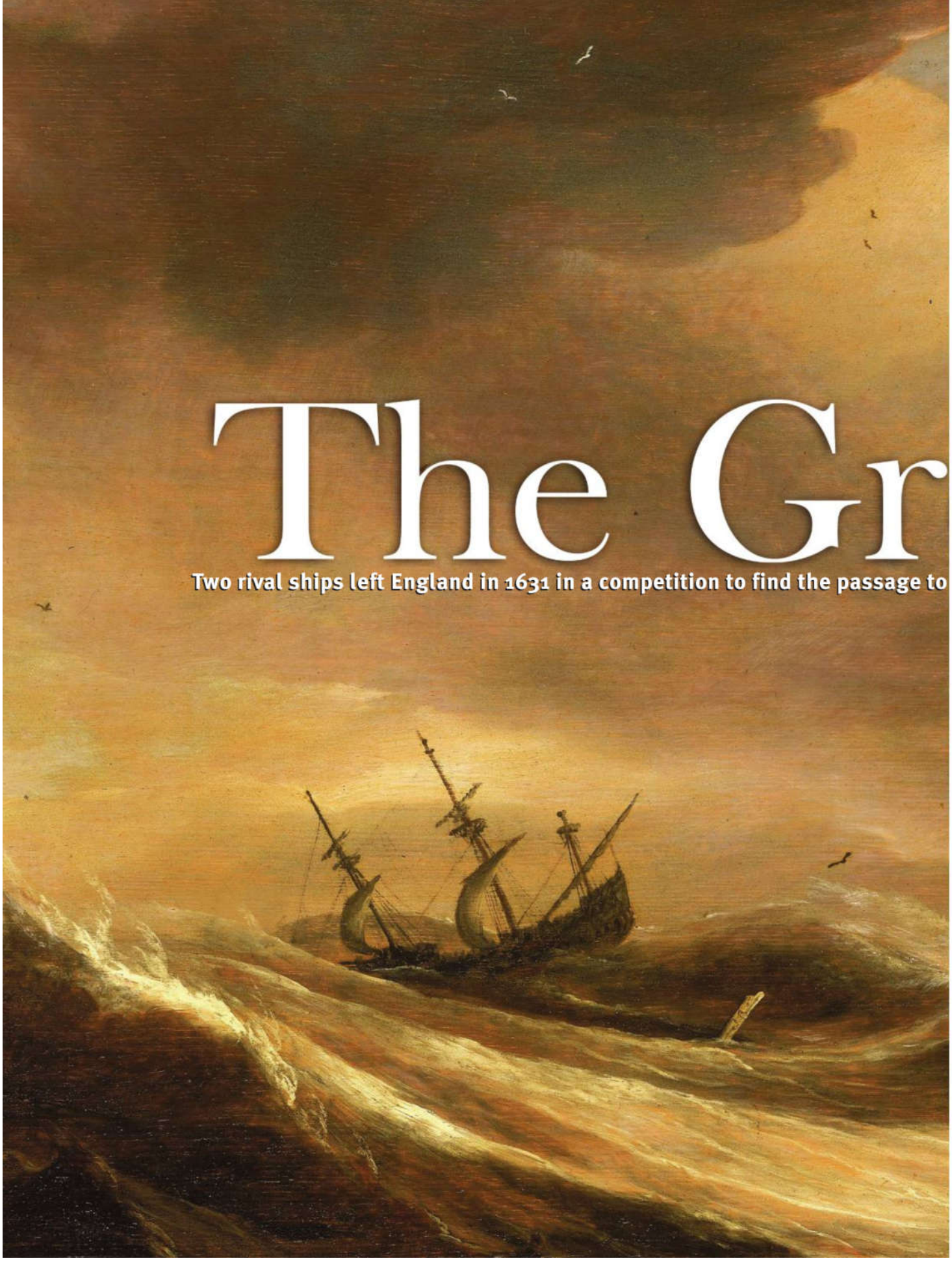
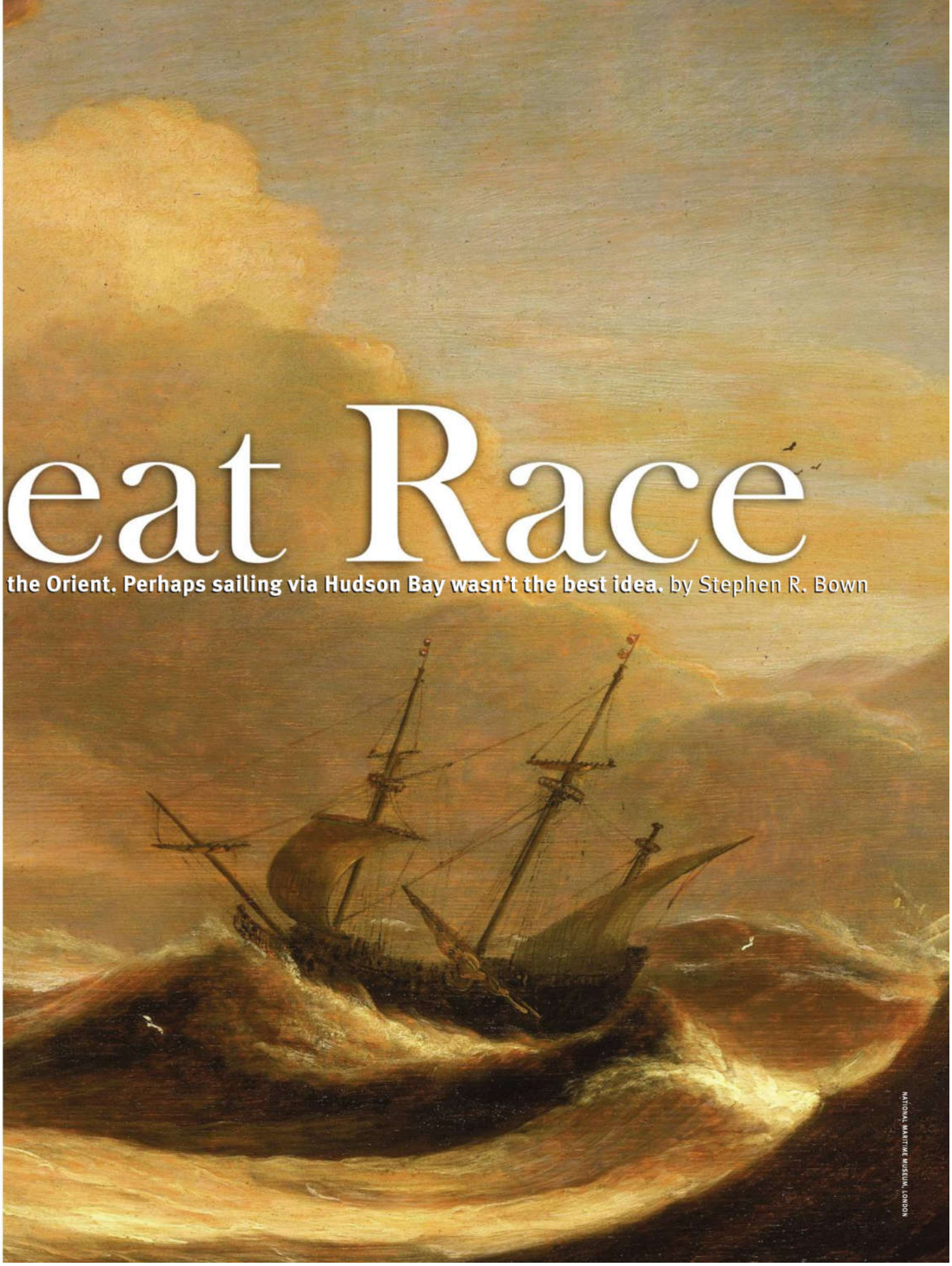


The Gr

Two rival ships left England in 1631 in a competition to find the passage to

eat Race

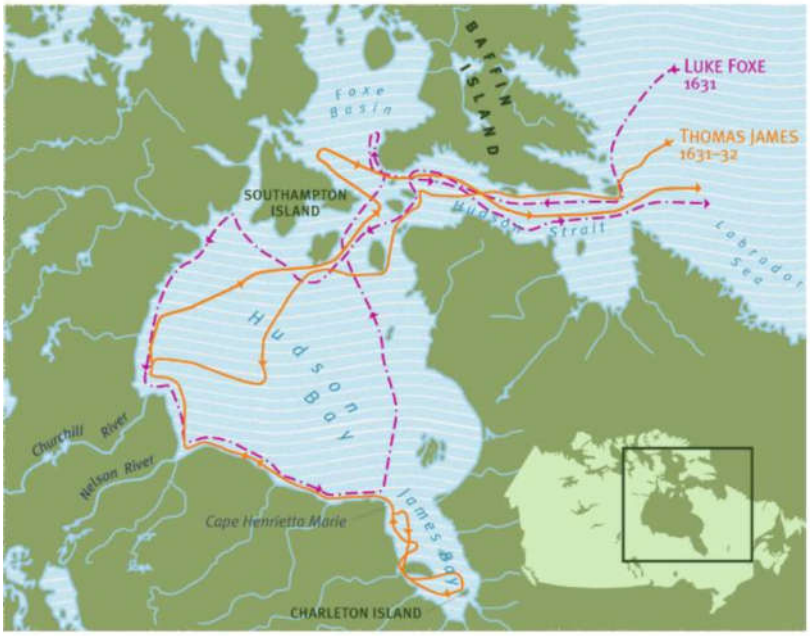
the Orient. Perhaps sailing via Hudson Bay wasn't the best idea. by Stephen R. Bown



NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON

The early 17th century was a time of commercial expansion for the prideful and optimistic nation of England. In the wake of the defeat of the Spanish Armada the path was open to assume a much greater role in world affairs. Merchants gambled on outlandish far-flung schemes seeking the luxuries of the Indies and Orient.

The only trade route to the silk, spices and gems of those distant and mysterious lands was precarious and long – circumnavigating the globe at its widest spot, passing through dangerous uncharted waters and exposing ships to hostile Spanish and Portuguese competitors. For most English merchants this route had been shut off in any case – the English East India Company, founded in 1600 as a government-sanctioned monopoly, ruthlessly limited the trade to its own members. Striving merchants sought an alternate route to the fabled wealth, searching for a northeast or northwest passage through the north of Europe or North America.



Thomas James and Luke Foxe's voyages into Hudson Bay.

Global maps from the early 17th century show the fragmented vision of the world's geography that was available to mariners. A vast blank expanse filled these maps, a frightening *terra incognita*, concealing who knew what possibilities for commerce or plunder. One of the regions with the greatest potential lay in the frigid waters of northern Canada. Based almost entirely on wishful thinking, some maps from the era actually show a winding waterway leading tortuously west from the ill-defined western shore of Hudson Bay to the Orient. Explorers such as Hudson, Button, Gibbons, Bylot, Baffin, Munk and Hawkeridge had returned from this region in recent decades, and many proclaimed the discovery of a navigable sea route west to be only a matter of time and persistence.

In 1629 a group of leading merchants in the City of London decided to outfit and promote a voyage to seek this fabulous new route to the Orient. When the leading merchants of Bristol, a rival trading port on England's west coast, got wind of the expedition they feared that once again a Royal monopoly granted to Londoners would shut them out of this global trade. They began outfitting a competing voyage.

Civic pride and emulation coupled with a fear of commercial loss spurred on the planning. By 1631 each city had outfitted a similar sized ship with 22 crew and two boys. Captain Luke Foxe was chosen to command the London ship, named the *Charles*, after the King. Thomas James was selected as captain of the Bristol ship, the *Henrietta Maria*, named after the Queen. Each captain was given an identical letter of state signed by King Charles I and addressed to the Emperor of Japan, written in English. The stakes were high, for a commercial monopoly such as was granted to the East India Company would make the merchants of London or Bristol enormously wealthy.

The race to Cathay was on.

The principal "racers" were unalike in terms of upbringing, education, personal philosophy and general demeanour, which contributed to their mutual animosity. Both men were in their early 40s and had considerable experience at sea. There the similarity ends. Thomas James was a fashionable bachelor; Luke Foxe was still happily married after nearly two decades. James was the learned, whimsical gentleman; a former Welsh lawyer and amateur poet, well versed in the latest mathematical techniques for navigation. Dreamy, romantic and sometimes impractical, James's journal was criticized in the early 19th century by geographer and Arctic exploration promoter Sir John Barrow, in his book *Chronological History of Voyages into the Arctic Regions*, for being a diary of "lamentation and weeping and great mourning; it is one continued strain of difficulties and dangers and complainings." But that journal, published in 1633 as *The Strange and Dangerous Voyage of Captain Thomas James*, is also a cracking good sea yarn bursting with tales of adventure and suffering in one of the most dangerous places then accessible to English mariners. Overwritten, exaggerated and melodramatic, it was a bestseller in its day and is still a classic of Arctic literature. "Many a storm, and rock, and mist, and wind, and tide, and sea, and mount of ice, have I, in this discovery encountered," begins James. "Many a despair and death had almost overwhelmed me."

A poem that James wrote while wintering in 1632 in what became known as James Bay reveals his driving personal motive for the voyage:

> We that survive perchance may end our days
> In some employment meriting no praise,
> And in a dung-hill rot; when no man names
> The memory of us, but to our shames,

Shipping in an Estuary **by Jan Karel Donatus van Beecq. Thought to represent the Avon River at Bristol. The painting is an idealized interpretation of the English landscape. Van Beecq worked in England between 1670 and 1720.**

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON

They have outlived this feare, and their brave ends
Will ever be an honour to their friends.

James's vainglorious navel-gazing meditations on honour in his journal stand in contrast to Foxe's earthy sentiments expressed in his 1635 book *North-West Fox; or Fox from the North-West Passage.*

To keep a warm cabin and lie in sheets is the most ignoble part of a seaman. But to endure and suffer a hard cabin, cold and salt meat, broken sleeps, mouldy bread, dead beer, wet clothes, want of fire … so doth Experience show Art how to see without spectacles.

Foxe was an old school mariner. Pragmatic, shrewd, stubborn and opinionated, he had spent his life at sea learning the ropes without benefit of formal education. He reserved a special ire for what he described as the "mathematicall sea-man," a not-so-subtle jab at James, whose "aery or aetherial" book learning Foxe was convinced would fail him in his battle against the "ruffe and boisterous ocean." Foxe begins *North-West Fox* rather more defensively than James.

"Gentle Reader," he soothes, "expect not heere florishing Phrases or Eloquent tearmes; for this child of mine, begot in the North-West's cold Clime (where they breed no Schollers), is not able to digest the sweet milke of Rhetorick, that's good for them."

Beneath the self-educated Yorkshireman's warty hide and gruff unyielding façade lurked a tender heart and a wry, self-deprecating sense of humour. Instead of a self-portrait to accompany the chart of his explorations, he sketched a fox running west with a goose dangling from its jaws. While growling at his men and admonishing them for sloth, use of tobacco, cowardice and insubordination, he also records in his journal his overriding concerns for their well-being and safety on the hazardous voyage. Foxe kept all of his men from perishing in the frigid ice-infested waters of Hudson Bay, something that cannot be said of James.

The two ships departed in the spring of 1631 from their respective ports, crossing the Atlantic and entering the treacherous and turbulent waters of Hudson Strait in June. Foxe somehow breezed through the strait, skirted the south coast of Coats Island, then pushed through thick ice floes, sailing north along the western coast of Southampton Island before being beaten back by ice. "We lie here in greater danger than I dare make shew of," he wrote before heeding the demands of his officers and terrified men to retreat in mid-July. Fearing a mutiny if he persisted northward, he turned the *Charles* southwest, cruising along the desolate, boulder-strewn west coast of Hudson Bay, passing the Churchill and Nelson Rivers.

James had a horrible ordeal passing through Hudson Strait. The fog was so thick he could barely see a ship's distance ahead. Great ice chunks tore and scraped at the metal plates on the *Henrietta Maria*'s hull, bruising the planking, while the small emergency boat it was towing behind was crushed and destroyed. It was an inauspicious beginning. The *Henrietta Maria* limped out of the strait and attempted to push northward but was repeatedly rebuffed by the grinding, impenetrable ice. James admitted defeat and on July 15 headed southwest across Hudson Bay to the vicinity of what is now Port Churchill, arriving Aug. 11. Ever the optimist, James recorded that fortunately, "This was the very place where the Passage should be." But it wasn't there, and in August James dejectedly ordered the ship southward to scour the coastline through weather "as cold as at any time I have felt in England."

A few days later, off the Nelson River, the first true disaster struck. During a stormy night the anchor stuck and seized when the men were hauling on the capstan. Eight men were slightly injured but "our Gunner (an honest and diligent man) had his legge taken betwixt the Cable and the Capstang, which wrung off his foote, and tare all the flesh off his legge, and crushed the bone to pieces, and sorely withal bruised all his whole body; in which miserable manner hee remained crying." They brought the mangled sailor into the dank, gloomy bowels of the ship, from where he was never to return. The ship's surgeon amputated his leg, but several weeks later he passed away in lonely agony and was found frozen in his bed clutching a bottle of wine James had given him to ease his torment.

On Aug. 29 the two ships sighted each other and sailed near to compare notes on their discoveries. Both captains were wary of sharing information, and each was probably secretly heartened that the other had not discovered anything of value either. While James entertained Foxe aboard his ship the next day, serving fresh game and good wine and volubly expounding his tale of adventure, Foxe sat stiff and aloof. He loathed James and his refined conversation. He was further annoyed when James graciously gave the crew of the *Charles* gifts of tobacco, which their captain despised.

Foxe rudely turned down James's offer to winter together. Grumpy and irascible, Foxe returned to his ship proclaiming that his meeting with James was the most wasted time of his entire voyage. Later he confided to his journal, of James: "The Gentleman could discourse of Art . . . but he was no seaman." James, on the other hand, was relieved that he would not to have to spend an entire winter with such a boastful sourpuss, riddled with the insecurity of his lower-class upbringing and unappreciative of James's lively tales and flighty musings. If these two captains had spent eight months huddling together awaiting the glacial approach of spring, there probably would have been a murder or duel.

STAPLETON COLLECTION/CORBIS

Explorers seeking the Northwest Passage.

"I never knew men to seek a Northwest Passage on a northeast shore," sniffed patron Sir Thomas Row.

The morning of Aug. 31 the two ships heaved anchor, hoisted sail and cruised away. Foxe steered north again into what would later be named Foxe Basin, on the western shores of Baffin Island. Facing freezing sleet and rain the ship plowed on through "the long nights, the cold dark weather with the decayed moon," until the terrifying and insidious appearance of scurvy in the crew. The ship was also driven back by mountainous polar bergs that threatened to crush it. The quarreling with his officers had worsened over the months. Fearing for his sickly crew, and worried about mutiny, Foxe reluctantly gave the order to turn for home. The morale of his men improved and they sailed east without incident, arriving in London on Oct. 31, 1631. They had been at sea six months.

Foxe's lucid conclusion about the region of Hudson Bay and points north was that "further search … this way is hopeless." This opinion, however well founded, was not well received by his sponsors, who had lost a lot of money

on the expedition. Sir Thomas Row, a patron of both expeditions, was not amused with Foxe's early return and pessimistic conclusion. "I never knew men to seek a Northwest Passage on a northeast shore," he sniffed. "So our hopes now rest upon Captain James, who is resolved to lose his life or return with more honour. … He shall hath gained infinite reputation to have taken this resolution, not to come home like a sluggard and say, a lion roars or was in his way."

Foxe was never considered a hero of English explorations. He had not suffered dramatic hardships or endured a relentless Arctic winter. He was also the first to boldly proclaim his opinion that the wealth of Cathay might not be within easy reach of England's merchants. His reputation never recovered. He died a few months after *North-West Fox* was published.

After the meeting with Foxe, James headed southeast into what is now known as James Bay. In November, realizing that the season was too far advanced to safely return to England, he put the damaged *Henrietta Maria* in harbour on tiny Charleton Island, which he named after King Charles. He and his crew spent a miserable winter huddled in three dreary huts on the wind-lashed nub of land. Scurvy showed its menacing progress in late winter; soon most of the men had blackened spongy gums, weeping sores and foul breath. They became weak and morose, whimpering like infants, unable to haul firewood from the nearby forest. James remained free of the terrifying disease because of his better diet, but recorded that he could hear "the miserable groanings and lamentations of the sick men all night, enduring (poore soules) intolerable torment."

Four more men died during the hellish winter. The weakened and sickly survivors revived themselves by sucking the withered roots and grasses that poked through the snow in the spring. By July they had recovered their strength and returned to the *Henrietta Maria*. James ordered one further dash northwards but was forced to retreat in the face of grinding ice, the advancing season and lack of supplies for a second winter. James and crew returned to Bristol after 18 months at sea, in October 1632, to great acclaim for their harrowing tale of hardship and heroic effort to locate the elusive passage, despite the dispiriting news that ended English Arctic exploration for nearly half a century. Like his nemesis Foxe, James died in 1635.

The second half of the 17th century saw growing interest in the potentially lucrative fur trade. This led to the formation in 1670 of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson's Bay, later shortened to the Hudson's Bay Company. Fur trading forts became entrenched along the shores of Hudson Bay, and the search for a sea route to the Orient was temporarily abandoned. Subsequent British explorations in the Arctic were orchestrated chiefly by the Hudson's Bay Company, with an eye to furthering its mercantile interests in the region rather than advancing geographical understanding.

The Scourge of Scurvy

Scurvy was responsible for more deaths at sea than storms, shipwreck, combat and other diseases combined. Historians have conservatively estimated that over 2 million sailors perished from scurvy between 1530 and 1850, the Age of Sail. Scurvy had sailed with virtually every major voyage of discovery, from Jacques Cartier to Vasco da Gama to Francis Drake. Scurvy is a hideous and frightful affliction where the body's connective tissue degenerates. Psychological signs such as melancholy, moroseness, listlessness, lack of motivation and unusual fatigue precede physical manifestations such as weakness, lack of coordination, easy bruising, aching joints, and swelling in the extremities. Later the gums swell and become spongy and blood-soaked, breath becomes foul and the skin becomes ill coloured, sallow and rubbery. Internal hemorrhaging causes purple splotches on the skin and under the eyes. Once-healed broken bones eventually come apart, leading to a slow, agonizing death.

Although it is associated with the sea and sailors, scurvy had appeared regularly in northern countries during winter, during sieges, in prisons or when harvests failed – anytime and anywhere people have subsisted on foods insufficient in ascorbic acid, vitamin C. But it was on long sea voyages that it became virtually an occupational disease for sailors because they had no means to carry fresh foods rich in the vital vitamin. Though Scottish physician James Lind discovered in 1747 that adding citrus fruits such as lemons and limes to the diet prevented scurvy, his findings were confusing and misunderstood and were embroiled in politics for another 40 years until the wars with Napoleonic France.

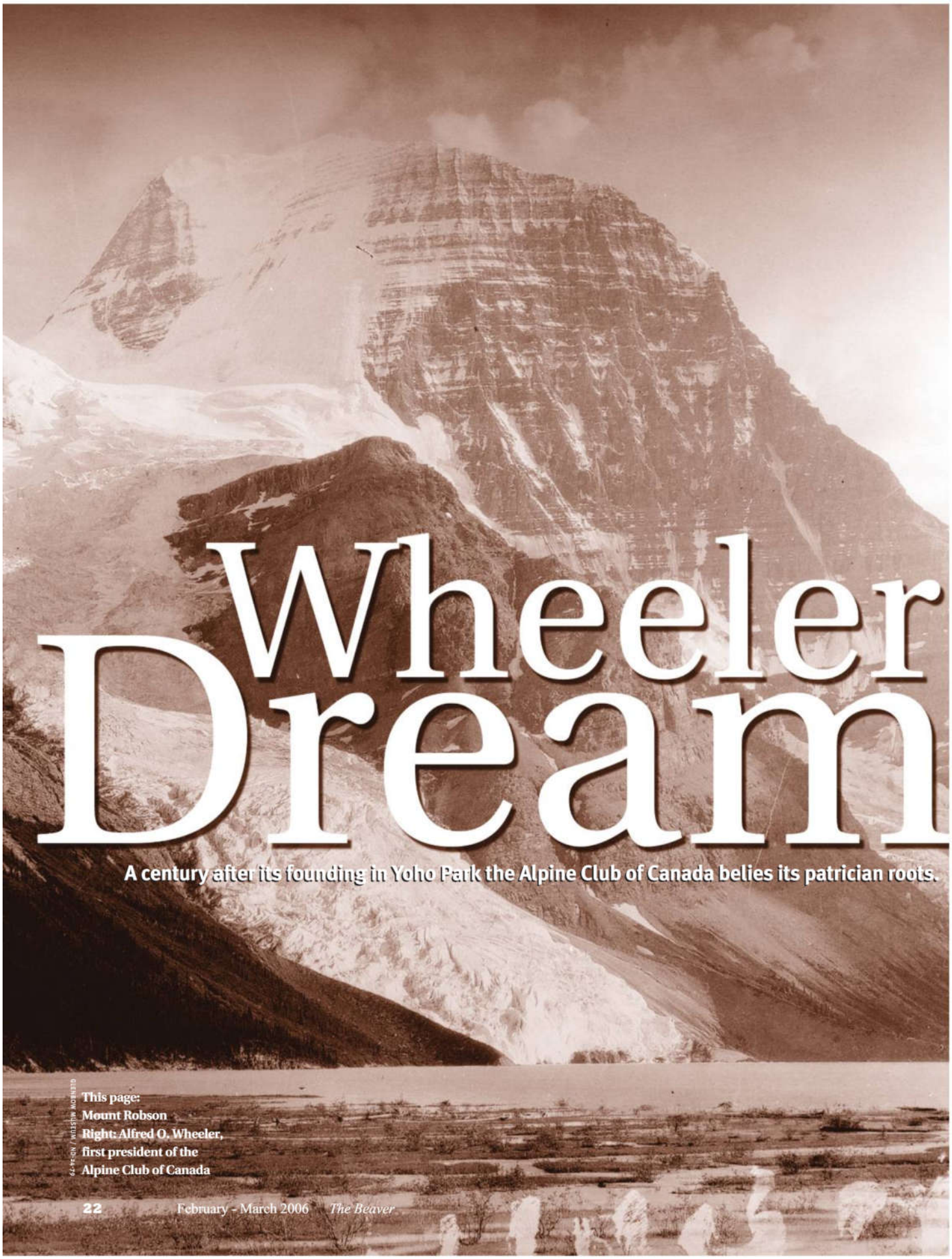
Adapted from *Scurvy: How a Surgeon, a Mariner and a Gentleman Solved the Greatest Medical Mystery of the Age of Sail* by Stephen R. Bown.

The legacy of the great sailing race to the Orient, inspired by greed and civic pride nearly four centuries ago, is apparent in a map of northeastern Canada. The names are there to plainly see. Named by Luke Foxe are Foxe Basin, Foxe Channel, Foxe Peninsula, Roe's Welcome Sound, Dunne Foxe Island, Foxe Peninsula and Hurin Throughlet. Named by Thomas James are James Bay, Charleton Island and Cape Henrietta Maria. These names, which survived the centuries and the fickle, politically motivated whims of later explorers, politicians and cartographers, are the only extant epitaph to the curmudgeonly Yorkshireman and the quixotic Welshman who raced these waters when they were uncharted and unknown, on a most improbable quest to deliver a letter of state to the Emperor of Japan.

Stephen R. Bown is a Canmore writer with a special interest in the history of science and exploration. His most recent book is *A Most Damnable Invention: Dynamite, Nitrates and the Making of the Modern World.*

Wheeler Dream

A century after its founding in Yoho Park the Alpine Club of Canada belies its patrician roots.



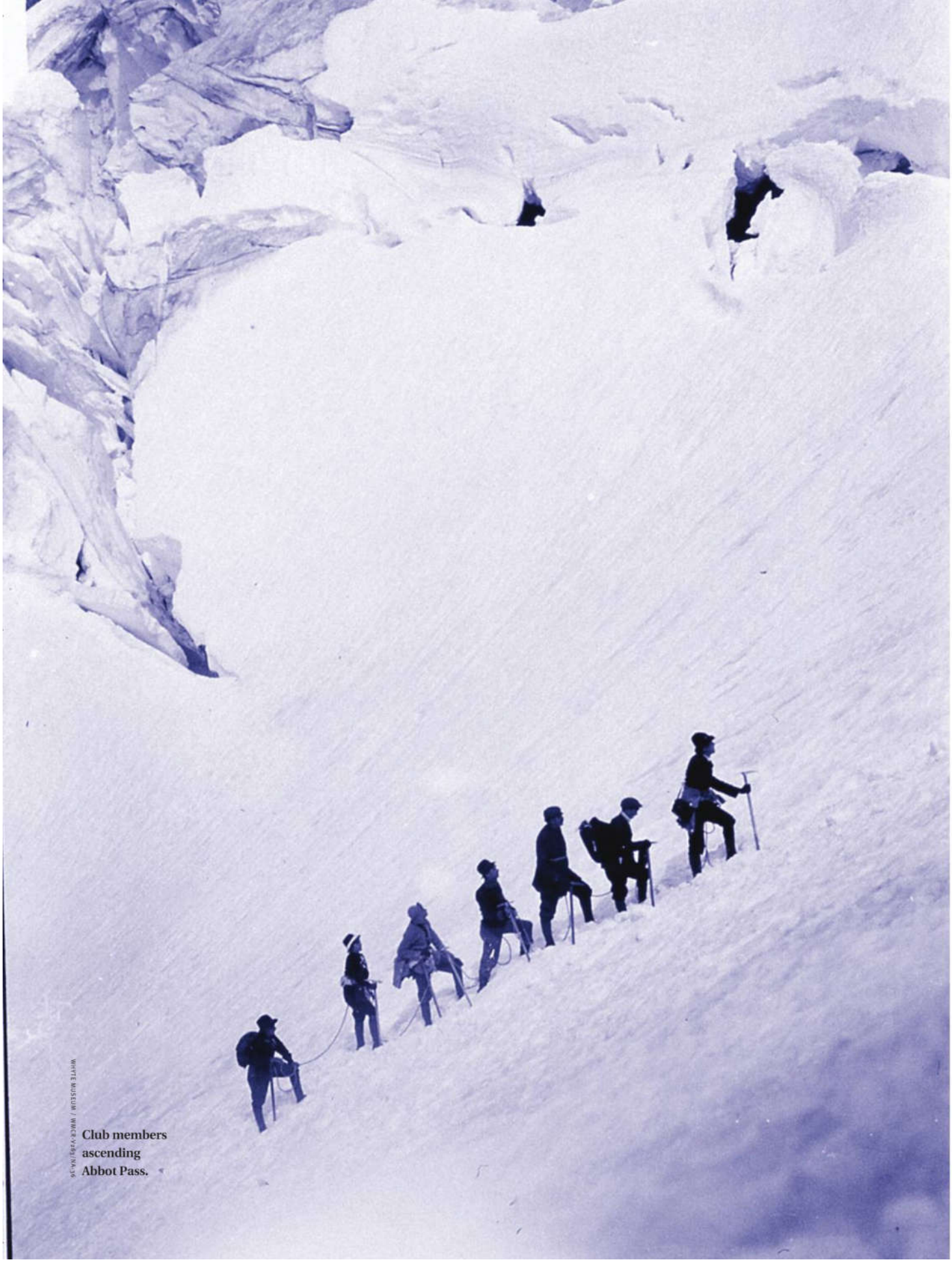
GLENBOW MUSEUM / NS-54-79

This page:
Mount Robson
Right: Alfred O. Wheeler, first president of the Alpine Club of Canada

'S

by Andrew Findlay

ENBOM MUSEUM / NA-4376-10



Club members ascending Abbot Pass.

WHYTE MUSEUM / WMCA-V-Fg-3A-96

By virtue of its constitution, the Alpine Club is a national trust for the defence of our mountain solitudes against the intrusion of steam and electricity and all the vandalisms of this luxurious, utilitarian age; for the keeping free from the grind of commerce, the wooded passes and valleys and alplands of the wilderness. It is the people's right to have primitive access to the remote places of safest retreat from the fever and the fret of the market place and the beaten tracts of life.

– Elizabeth Parker, first secretary of the Alpine Club of Canada

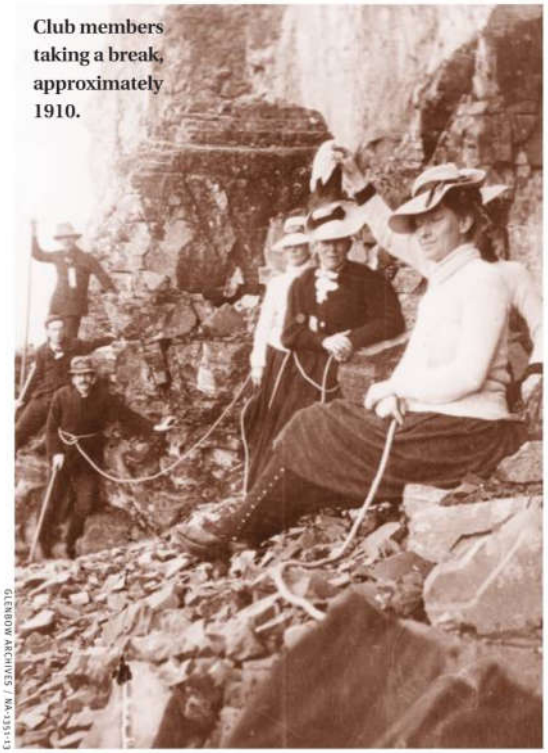
Water trickles into the darkness of a crevasse, disappearing over the lip of snow with a strange silence that suggests a bottomless chasm below. Fractured, imposing granite spires tower on either side of the Proteus Glacier, where a four-person rope team moves slowly upwards. As the pitch of the glacier rears up, the climbers pick their way through a dangerous maze of slots and holes. The sound of their crampons crunching on ice keeps them alert. Second on the rope, Peggy Taylor bears an expression of abject fear, but she is determined. Taylor is from Victoria, B.C., where the closest most people get to mountaineering is standing atop Beacon Hill Park, cappuccino in hand, gazing at the snowy, volcanic massif of Mount Baker across the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

A love of the outdoors and a wish to challenge herself at higher altitudes led Taylor to sign up for the Alpine Club of Canada's annual camp, held last summer 100 kilometres south of Rogers Pass in B.C.'s Selkirk Range. "I wasn't getting any younger so I thought, why not go for it?" says the 42-year-old law firm bookkeeper. Now with every fatigued step Taylor takes toward the lofty, lonely summit of Mount Proteus, she walks with the ghosts of generations of mountain enthusiasts who have climbed before her. This year the Alpine Club of Canada celebrates 100 years of bringing together neophytes such as Taylor, experienced amateurs and professional guides to scramble, hike, climb and ski in Canada's alpine wilderness. However, when the club was formed it symbolized something more than just a desire to scale rock, snow and ice; it was an embodiment of a tenuous abstraction – the Canadian identity.

The late 19th century was a heady time in western Canada. With the completion of the national dream in the autumn of 1885 steel rails bound the country from coast to coast, ushering in a new era of mountain tourism. The Canadian Pacific Railway, eager to exploit the natural splendour of the Rocky Mountains, built a chain of opulent hotels, among them the Banff Springs Hotel, Chateau Lake Louise and the long-gone Glacier House in Rogers Pass. Swiss guides were imported – along with their alpine expertise – to lead railway travellers in the mountains.

In turn, affluent Americans and Europeans flocked to Canada's West to make first ascents in the vast untrammelled Columbia and Rocky Mountain ranges. After returning home, they wrote eloquently of their conquests, filling formerly blank maps with the names of their newly climbed prizes. Typical of these refined pioneers was Charles Fay, a professor of modern languages from the United States who had undertaken climbing adventures in the Canadian Rockies. A peak above Moraine Lake, Mount Fay, is named in his honour.

That mostly foreigners were claiming these Canadian prizes irked Alfred O. Wheeler, an energetic, loquacious and somewhat acerbic Irish Canadian. Wheeler came by his affection for the mountains honestly. Born in Kilkenny County, Ireland in 1860, he took up surveying after immigrating to Canada with his family at age 16. In 1883, as an employee of the Dominion Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway, Wheeler headed west to survey town sites. Rambling in the mountains, he became an avid climber. However, Wheeler made no secret of his disdain for the perceived



Club members taking a break, approximately 1910.

GLENBOW ARCHIVES / NA-335-13

According to Wheeler's rules, men and women were not permitted to share a tent, women were forbidden from wearing trousers at the camp and consumption of alcohol was prohibited.

exclusivity of alpinism, a pursuit then accessible only to those who could afford a luxury suite and private Swiss guides. He started dreaming of a truly Canadian climbing institution, modelled after the flagship British alpine club that had been created in 1857, but less class-based.

"He had Irish emotions, Irish sensitivity, Irish grace and, more frequently than some would like, an Irish temper," wrote climbing enthusiast Andrew J. Kauffman, adding that "until Wheeler came along mountaineering in Canada was almost exclusively a rich man's monopoly."

At first the concept of a Canadian alpine club was a tough sell. Apathy greeted Wheeler's dream. Members of the American Alpine Club approached him with an offer of forming a Canadian chapter of their organization. Frustrated by a lack of national interest, in 1905 he started penning letters to numerous papers, including the *Manitoba Free Press*, then western Canada's leading newspaper. With resignation, Wheeler mused that it might be easier for the young nation to accept an offer of affiliation from the Americans. *Free Press* editor J.W. Dafoe redirected Wheeler's letter to one of his columnists, Elizabeth Parker, knowing that she had recently spent 18 months in the Canadian Rockies. That it landed in her hands was fortuitous, because Parker was an ardent nationalist and a passionate booster of Canada's mountain heritage.

Alpine Club of Canada's founders, 1906. Alfred O. Wheeler, standing third from left, front row, Elizabeth Parker by his side.

WHYTE MUSEUM / WMCR V25 J NA 57

On Nov. 25, 1905, Parker published a terse screed chastising Wheeler for his less-than-patriotic suggestion: "Surely, between Halifax and Victoria, there can be found at least a dozen persons who are made of the stuff, and care enough about our mountain heritage to redeem Canadian apathy and indifference. It is simply amazing that for so long we have cared so little," she wrote, aiming her pen squarely at Wheeler. The equally blunt Irishman got the message, commenting that the plucky scribe had "declaimed my action as unpatriotic, chided my lack of imperialism and generally gave me a pen-lashing in words sharper than a sword."

Wheeler resumed the challenge and Parker turned her considerable talents toward campaigning for a truly Canadian alpine club. At Parker's urging, the *Free Press* devoted a hefty volume of ink to the cause and the idea gained momentum, igniting in certain Canadians a sense of patriotic duty. The efforts culminated March 27, 1906, when Wheeler managed to gather a quorum. The Alpine Club of Canada was born. It all happened in Winnipeg, ironically thousands of kilometres from any serious bump in the landscape. Parker became the alpine club's secretary and Wheeler its determined first president.

About four months later, 100 people who knew next to nothing about climbing, among them pipe-smoking gentlemen in top hats and adventurous ladies dressed in full-length plaid skirts and straw summer hats, travelled by train to the mountain-encircled town of Field, just west of the continental divide in B.C., for the inaugural camp. After the packhorses were loaded, this unlikely conglomeration hit the trail, crossing the Kicking Horse River and following an 11-kilometre dirt track through gentle forest to the shores of Emerald Lake. After skirting around this spectacular glacier-fed tarn, they cut across a vast alluvial delta, riven with dozens of rushing streams. They entered steep timber and began climbing toward Yoho Pass, a broad saddle between Wapta Mountain and Michael Peak. That evening the last of the packhorses arrived at a pleasant meadow on the shores of Yoho Lake, and while the campfire crackled and tea brewed, the guides and outfitters took to setting up the tents.

Before long a cluster of civilization had been established 2,000 metres high in the Canadian Rockies, complete with a "Residence Park, Official Square, and horse paddock." The nascent alpine club had some outside help getting started. Four of the guides and outfitters generously volunteered their services. The Canadian Pacific Railway, always on the lookout for potential business opportunities, chipped in with guides and cooks, as well as tents and other camping supplies, presuming that a successful camp would translate into future rail passengers.

Wheeler commanded the camp with the oversight of a general and was much admired for his energy and organization. By some accounts he was also a rather prudish sort who couldn't help but leave his personal imprint on the proceedings. Though he desired an open and inclusive club he was unable to entirely shed certain pretensions. According to Wheeler's rules, men and women were not permitted to share a tent, women were forbidden from wearing trousers at the camp (they were asked to wear skirts to maintain a sense of decorum) and consumption of alcohol was prohibited.

The camp report written by participant Frank Yeigh for the 1907 club journal reads like a masterpiece of bombastic Victorian parlance – an unintentionally humorous portrait of mountain life. Describing their voyage toward the camp, Yeigh gushed, "Most of the

campers were first trampers over this bit of road, a few following in the comfortable carriages or perched aloft on the commissariat wagons. Striking to a degree were the costumes worn by the mountain invaders, and while not so stylish as an Easter day parade at Atlantic City, there was more variety."

Later he described the pleasant influence of female participants who "gave the heartiest assistance in all matters wherein feminine skill is most required – in helping the cook, decorating and waiting on the tables, and generally making themselves charming around the camp fire." Though it had all the trappings of an English smoking club, at its inception Wheeler wished the club to be a place where people of relatively modest means – folks like him – could be introduced to the world of mountaineering. And women, far from having a mere decorative presence at the camp, were eager climbing participants. They traded skirts for wool trousers and donned hobnailed boots to ascend peaks such as the President and Vice President, demanding, 10-hour round-trip excursions.

On July 16, when the camp broke, it was declared an unequivocal success. As Elizabeth Parker wrote in the Alpine Club of Canada journal the following year, the formation of the club "was a red-letter day to some who had long felt the reproach of Canadian apathy to Canadian mountains."

Wheeler, an intensely competitive man, was eager to advance the prestige of the young club. A few years after the first camp he began scheming about Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies, making it his duty to ensure that the first ascent of this imposing summit would fall to an alpine club team. And it did on July 31, 1913, when the legendary club guide, Austrian-born Conrad Kain, led two climbers to the difficult, 3,954-metre summit. Upon reaching the peak, Kain famously declared: "Gentlemen, that's so far as I can take you." The two climbers interpreted these words as meaning they had failed to reach the summit, then realized they were just steps shy of it. The achievement was considered one of the boldest feats in Canadian mountaineering and it neatly served Wheeler's desire to raise the club's profile.

From its outset the club was more than just a summer camp for climbers – it was also a conduit for scientific research and the appreciation and development of mountain culture. According to Yeigh even the first camp had scientific aims: "In the matter of Science, work was begun by placing a row of metal plates across the ice tongue of the Yoho glacier to mark its rate of flow down its bed. Rocks also were marked to show the advance or retreat of the ice."

A century after the first camp, the club remains at the centre of Canada's mountaineering community. Every year it awards grants to individuals and organizations involved in wilderness conservation and research through its Environment Fund. As stewards of the environment, the club supports projects that contribute to the protection and preservation of mountain and climbing environments, including the preservation of alpine flora and fauna.

Alfred O. Wheeler and Elizabeth Parker both have mountain huts named after them, at Rogers Pass and Lake O'Hara, respectively. The Alpine Club of Canada has grown and now runs six consecutive weeklong camps in a different region every summer. It also offers a host of other skiing, mountaineering and hiking trips. With membership reaching 5,500, the club will use its 100th anniversary to remind Canadians about its history and ongoing relevance.

After hours of meandering around crevasses and over snow bridges, the glacier twists and unravels behind the climbers like a superhighway of ice. They have moved between physical mediums, from the realm of ice to the realm of granite rock that forms a blocky ridge to the summit of Proteus. By modern standards the climbing is not difficult, but the jaw-dropping void to the right, a vertical plunge of more than 500 metres, is unnerving. It has been a day of many firsts for Victoria's Peggy Taylor – climbing with crampons on ancient glacial ice, scaling a granite ridge and reaching the summit of Mount Proteus.

"Being in that kind of environment you can draw on some reserves of adrenaline that you normally wouldn't be able to. For me it was fresh and exciting and it surpassed any expectations that I had," Taylor reflects. Through this alpine experience she has joined generations of climbers that have turned to the Alpine Club of Canada to explore the vertical aspects of nature. Though the camps are no longer the prudish Victorian affairs they were when Alfred O. Wheeler marched 100 pioneers up to Yoho Pass, the club remains true to the spirit of exploring and protecting alpine environments – a legacy that began in Winnipeg 100 years ago, smack in the centre of Canada.

"Gearing Up" for the Centennial

As part of the club's centennial, mountain historian Bob Sandford is spearheading an ambitious pro-ject to edit 100 annual alpine club journals and compile them into fully indexed DVDs. Sandford says the journals, which include minutes from meetings, trip reports and obituaries, are a treasure trove of history, tracking a century of evolving consciousness surrounding mountain culture and environments, as well as a record of the lives of four generations of climbers. A complete listing of centennial events can be viewed at www.alpineclubofcanada.ca.

Andrew Findlay is a B.C.-based freelance journalist who writes about the environment, travel, adventure, history and anything else that captures his imagination.

Library and Archives Canada rare books collection manager Elaine Hoag with a first edition copy of *Wacousta*.

COLIN ROWE

THE Pen AND THE Sword

John Richardson lived hard and died harder. On the way, he wrote the novel that marks the birth of Canadian literature. by Peter Unwin

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA C 31606

At the age of 15 he shook Tecumseh's hand only hours before the great Shawnee leader was killed. By 16 he was a veteran of five military campaigns. A year later he was a prisoner of war. At 19 he sailed to Europe and fought his first duel. The next year found him in uniform in Barbados where he saw the heads of slaves mounted on poles. By 22 he was gambling in the salons of Paris and fighting more duels. He went to war in Spain and was shot three times. He married, separated, remarried and was widowed. In middle age he moved from Canada to New York City where he lived and died in appalling poverty. In the meantime he did something no Canadian had done before – he wrote books.

John Richardson was born Oct. 4, 1796, probably in today's Niagara-on-the-Lake. His grandfather was the fur trader John Askin, who owned 7 million acres of North American land, much of which he surrendered rather than pledge an oath of allegiance to the United States. His grandmother was a native woman, possibly Ottawa. His father, a Scottish surgeon, spent a portion of his career inoculating natives against smallpox and his mother was cultured, bilingual and educated in the *Couvent de Notre Dame* in Montreal. She would die of tuberculosis when Richardson was 13.

The boy's early years were passed in Detroit where he was cared for by his Askin grandparents. Later, reunited with his family in Amherstburg, Canada, he began schooling, which he despised, and where, in his own words, he was "more frequently flogged than the greatest dunce." In 1812 the Americans declared war on Great Britain and struck at Canada. To Richardson's joy, the schools were closed. "I felt disposed to bless the Americans," he wrote.

He at once enlisted as a 15-year-old gentleman officer and marched to war. Of his first exposures to the battlefield he remembered "the pestilential exhalations arising from the naked and putrid bodies of horses and men." By 16 he had engaged in battle five times, and had seen scalps,

and other parts of human skin, "principally taken from the hands and feet," drying in the sun. At Moraviantown, near present-day Chatham, Ont., Richardson fought alongside native forces under the command of Tecumseh, the great leader who spread a doomed message of tribal unification against European encroachment. On the morning of Oct. 5, 1813, Tecumseh walked the British line shaking hands with every officer in it, including the young and deeply impressed John Richardson. Hours later Tecumseh was killed in action, his body mutilated by American soldiers. Richardson was captured and marched in Frankfort, Kentucky.

At the end of the war, in the fall of 1814, Richardson was back on Canadian soil in Kingston. For five months he lay in his barracks, wracked by fever. In the spring he embarked for Quebec, then sailed to England and was keenly disappointed to learn that Napoleon had been defeated at Waterloo, leaving him no one to fight. In London's Hyde Park, he fought his first duel, over another man's criticism of a young actress. Neither party was injured.

By the winter of 1816 he was in Barbados on a military appointment. Once on the island, his colleagues immediately began to die of yellow fever. During his short stay he saw the heads of rebellious slaves rotting on poles all around him, learned of the summary execution of 1,000 black men as revenge for the death of two white slave owners and was appalled by the sexual liaisons imposed on slave girls as young as 12. Of this time Richardson would later ask, "Is cruelty then, inseparable from power?"

At the age of 22 John Richardson, dark and handsome, was back on the Continent, moving easily with the *Regency demimonde* of the 1820s. He took up gambling, in particular *écarté*, at which he became skilled. By 1821 he was living in Paris, running with a crowd of young poets and gamblers. Here, he found time to marry – and to publish. In 1825 *The New Monthly Magazine* printed the first installment of his War of 1812 narrative, *A Canadian Campaign*. He followed this with the poem *Tecumseh, or the Warrior of the West*, of which a critic at the time wrote, "the feeling that prompted it is better than the execution." The poem contains several lines predicting the haunted relationship Richardson would carry on with his birthplace.

> Still there are those who …
> Fain renew upon that savage soil
> Their first privations

Then came *Écarté, or the Salons of Paris*, probably the first novel to be written by anyone born in Canada. With this book, about an Englishman inveigled by a French aristocrat and his mistress, Richardson also became the first Canadian writer to be smeared by a critic. William Jerden, believing the author to be another Richardson to whom he was hostile, wrote in a London publication that *Écarté* could not be described without "polluting our paper," and was "unfit to be seen beyond the … stews [slums]." Remarkably, Richardson refrained from shooting the man even though the review killed sales of the book in England and his publisher dropped him. A pirated edition, for which he received nothing, sold better in the United States. Telling of these Byronic times, and perhaps more telling of Richardson, in *Écarté* a woman spurned by her lover experiences emotions of such power that a blood vessel explodes in her head and she dies.

In 1830 Richardson published the poem, *Kensington Gardens in 1830*, an indiscreet "satirical trifle by the author of *Écarté*." With these early works, Richardson was turning the tables on a literary form that was already centuries old: the European observer who comes to the New World and writes about it for readers back home. Richardson, born and raised in the hardwood forests of southern Ontario, was himself in Europe writing books about the foibles of Europeans. Two years later, he published the novel that is widely regarded as the beginning of Canadian literature.

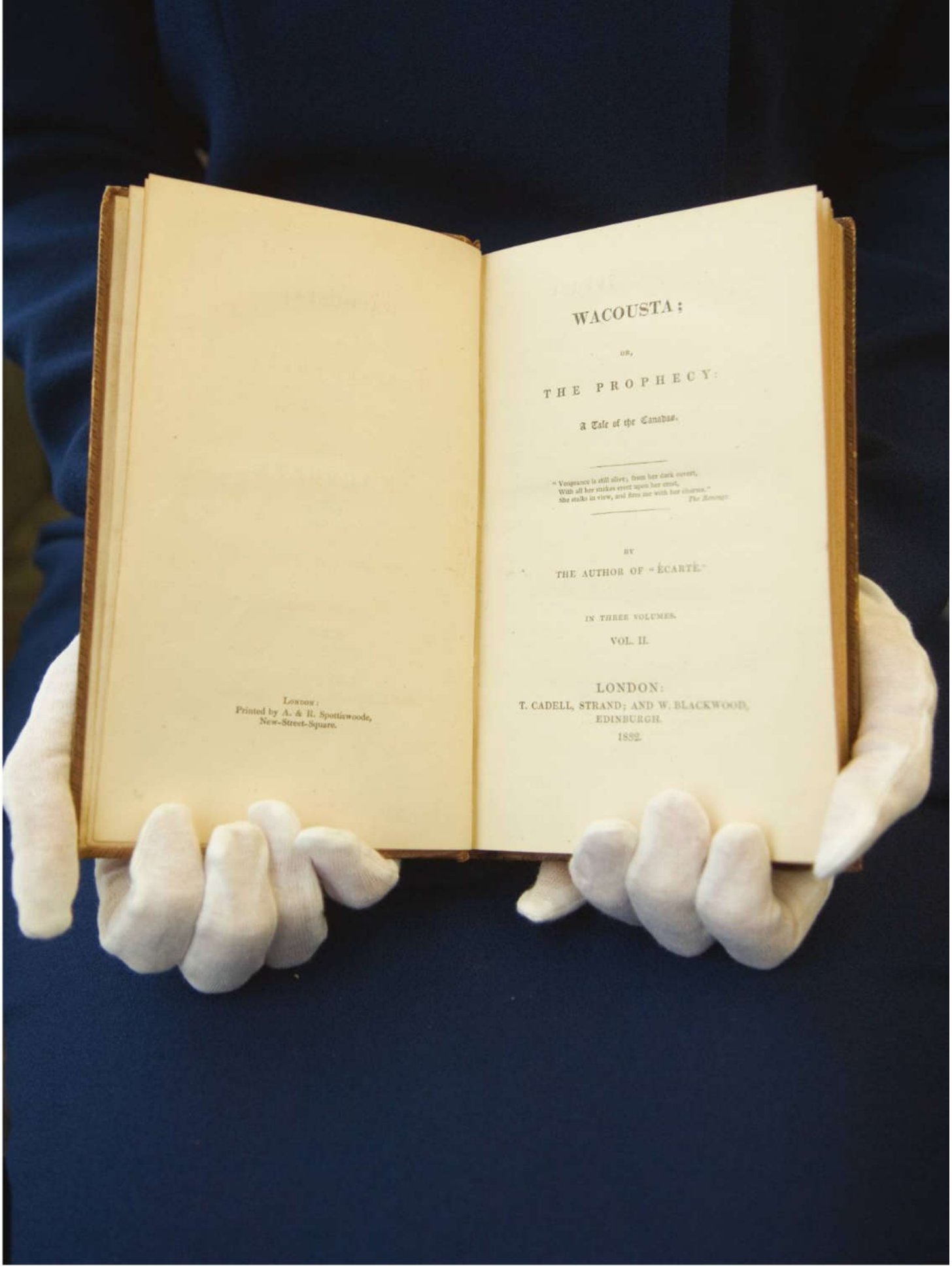
Wacousta, or the Prophecy, a Tale of the Canadas – which has remained in print almost continuously for nearly a century and a half – is a story dominated by a scream. Throughout its more than 500 pages, men act with incredible bravery, but to no avail, and die brutally at the hands of a murderer. Their "oozing brains" are licked off the earth by "wolf-dogs." Children are scalped, a woman is taunted, raped and murdered. A man successfully disguises himself as a beaver. Infuriating lapses in logic cause an innocent man to be charged, convicted and instantly executed. A woman pronounces a terrible curse over the corpse of her husband. Bodies fall from the sky and land on the decks of ships. Men who open their mouths to speak are frequently dead before their sentence is finished. A dense and extraordinarily claustrophobic novel, *Wacousta* contains some 175,000 words and at times it feels like an equal number of characters. In the grand Gothic tradition, bosoms heave, blood curdles and on two occasions "the vampire of despair banquets" on people's hearts.

"In Richardson's work the male and female body are constantly being gazed at and lusted over."

Wacousta is also a template for Canadian literary racism. Despite his own probable, if distant, native origins, his admiration for Tecumseh and native life in general, Richardson wrote for the white audience of his times: "Ingians" are lumped together as a nameless, seething, treacherous mass who scalp people, shriek and sling beautiful blond-haired women across their shoulders. Wacousta himself is a white man. The subtleties and complexities of native languages are reduced to the single word, "Uggh."

The book, despite itself, is also strangely brilliant, stained with madness and violence and situated on the edges of a startling eroticism:

COLIN ROWE



WACOUSTA;

OR,

THE PROPHECY:

A Tale of the Canadas.

"Vengeance is still alive; from her dark covert,
With all her snakes erect upon her crest,
She stalks in view, and fires me with her charms."
The Revenge.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "ÉCARTÉ."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
T. CADELL, STRAND; AND W. BLACKWOOD,
EDINBURGH.
1832.

London:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

Five More With Pen

With *Écarté* and *Wacousta* (the latter recently named by the *Literary Review of Canada* as one of the 100 most important Canadian books), John Richardson may be the first Canadian-born author to have novels published, but he wasn't a lone scribbler in Canada's pre-Confederation period. A handful of other writers also toiled on fiction, though in many cases a truly Canadian voice in their works may be more nascent than apparent. The first Canadian novel, for instance, is ascribed to Frances Brooke (1724–1789), an English dramatist and essayist who in 1763 followed her husband, a military chaplain, to Quebec for a five-year stay. *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) is a conventional Old World love story, but it's set against the social and political conditions of 18th-century Quebec under British rule. Scottish-born educator and theologian Thomas McCulloch (1776–1843) landed in Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1803 and in the 1820s wrote a satirical series of fictional letters published in the *Acadian Recorder*. Reprinted as *The Stepsure Letters* in 1862, they were intended to provoke rural Nova Scotians to improve themselves by exalting the moral superiority of life pursued on the land instead of in commercial ventures. Something of the same philosophy is found in *The Clockmaker* by Nova Scotia-born politician and judge Thomas Chandler James (1796–1865). Printed in installments in the newspaper *NovaScotian*, the satirical sayings of the fictional Yankee clockmaker Sam Slick of Slickville were published in book form in 1836. Montreal-born, Irish-descended Rosanna Eleanor Leprohon (1829–1879) began her career writing novels of manners set in England, but after marrying a French Canadian in 1851, she focused her attention on Quebec society and wrote three novels, *The Manor House of de Villerai, Antoinette de Mirecourt* and *Armand Durand*, set in late 18th- and early 19th-century Lower Canada. In 1863, Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé (1786–1871) published his historical romance *Les Anciens Canadiens*, considered the first classic of French Canadian fiction. Set in rural Quebec at the time of the Conquest, it is a nostalgic but epic portrayal of seigneurial life in New France. Translated into English in 1864, it remained popular enough for novelist Charles G.D. Roberts to translate it again in 1890 as *The Canadians of Old*.

> The female … fixed her dark and brilliant eyes upon the tall and picturesque form of the rifleman whose active and athletic limbs, thrown into powerful relief by the distension of each nerve and muscle, appeared to engross her whole admiration and interest.

This passage is unlike anything the reader will ever find in the novels of Jane Austen or, arguably, in the novels of anyone else writing at that time. In Richardson's work the male and female body are constantly being gazed at and lusted over. The sexual urge becomes even more visible in his future work, especially the late novels, *Westbrook* and the scandalous if not pornographic *The Monk Knight of St. John*.

By 1838, after three years in Spain as part of a mercenary British force fighting a coalition of Basque rebels who opposed the rule of the Spanish queen, Richardson was back in Canada with a new wife, Maria Drayson. (What happened to his first wife is unknown.) Richardson had convinced the conservative London newspaper *The Times* to hire him to report on the troubles in the Canadas. It was *Time*'s assumption that Richardson shared their contempt for reform, which he probably did. Richardson's 21-year-old brother had been part of the gang that forced its way into William Lyon Mackenzie's house during the Rebellion of 1837 and heaved his printing press into Lake Ontario. In one of Richardson's first dispatches, he ridiculed Mackenzie's "mad and impotent career of treason." But in Montreal he became fast friends and a great admirer of Governor General Lord Durham, who, sympathetic to moderate reform in the colonies, was being vilified back in England in *Times* editorials. Richardson wrote glowingly of Durham's effort and was fired for his views.

Undaunted, Richardson contributed political articles to newspapers, edited Canadian journals, shopped his memoirs to publishers and established himself as a one-man Canadian literary industry. He also continued to make powerful enemies. Challenged to a duel by a man he did not consider worthy, he later found the lampposts of Montreal covered with posters proclaiming him to be a coward. He then agreed to the duel, but could find no one to act as a second. The duel was cancelled and he was again postered as a coward. In a cruel slight both he and his wife were refused admission to the regimental ball. Ostracized, he and Maria left Montreal in May 1839 along with their much-beloved dog, Hector, journeying across Canada to a rented home in what is now Windsor. Here, Richardson finished *The Canadian Brothers, or the Prophecy Fulfilled*, a sequel to *Wacousta*. Unknown as a novelist in his native country, he was something of a celebrity in nearby Detroit, where *Wacousta*, in a pirated edition, had been avidly read and successfully staged.

By November he was back in Montreal arranging for the publication of *The Canadian Brothers*. The subscription lists were disappointingly small and Richardson penned one of the first rebukes of Canadian reading habits:

> The people here are too much of pounds, shillings and pence men to care much about polite literature … they would far more rejoice in a grand distiller of whisky than a writer of books.

In June 1841 Richardson and Maria moved to a cottage in Brockville where Richardson sold his military commission to buy a printing press. He began publication of a newspaper, *The New Era, or the Canadian Chronicle*, with

the stated intent of introducing real literature (his own) to Canada. He raised few subscribers, although he did manage, in his garden, to raise watermelons, perhaps the first Canadian to succeed at this.

In the festering political atmosphere of the Canadas in the 1840s his enemies grew more numerous, blocking any sort of appointment he might receive. His dog, Hector, was poisoned. Richardson is said to have wept over this, and to have posted a reward for the killers. In recompense, he tamed a deer and kept it as a pet. He was in debt, his cottage was reclaimed, and children taunted him in public – so much so that Richardson took to rebuking them in his newspaper. His book *The War of 1812*, which he had reason to believe would replace the American texts being taught in Canadian schools, was ignored. Putting his printing press in hock, Richardson, Maria and the deer moved to Kingston, where he received 250 pounds from the government to continue his historical writings on the 1812 conflict. In 1843 he got the press back and began publishing his second newspaper, *The Canadian Loyalist and Spirit of 1812*. The paper was lively and well read, with Richardson, as usual, contributing most of the copy.

The paper shut down for financial reasons at the end of 1844. Through the influence of his friend Lord Metcalf, governor general of British North America, he was appointed as superintendent of police for the Welland Canal works, and he and his wife moved to St. Catharine's. With this appointment, Richardson incurred an enormous amount of resentment. Canal labourers worked in near-slave conditions. When they attempted to strike, the government called in soldiers, who shot at the strikers. Richardson entered the fray, despised by reformers, trusted by no one and harassed daily in a series of petty intrigues that saw him arrested on charges that included "walking violently," for which, in front of his wife, he was removed from his home and fined a shilling. In the face of this harassment, Maria fell ill. Richardson, forced to defend himself in court, was often away from the house. On Aug. 16, 1845, at the age of 37, Maria Drayson Richardson died of apoplexy, while her husband rode hastily from the courthouse to be with her.

Richardson was left, in his own words, "desolate and without hope." For six months he did not enter a private house. Unemployed, in debt and friendless, he stole away in the middle of the night. In Montreal, he started another newspaper and wrote *The Monk Knight of St. John*, which to some scholars is just page after page of "lip-licking dirtiness."

It is believed that John Richardson left Montreal for New York in May 1849. His time was running out and perhaps he sensed it – a letter he had written earlier entitled "A Believer in Impending Doom to the Whole of the Present Human Race" predicted the world would end in 1852.

At first, things seemed to go well for the Canadian literary lion in New York. Two new novels, *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, were published immediately, and to some acclaim. Even the lurid *The Monk Knight of St. John* was printed, although the publisher thought it prudent to remove the company's name from the book. Two different stage versions of *Wacousta* were being performed in American cities. Richardson's stories appeared in American magazines.

For all of this he was going deeply and fatally broke. "Will you lend me ten to fifteen dollars," he wrote to an American acquaintance, Rufus Griswold, who would eventually become literary executor to another tough-luck writer – Edgar Allan Poe. Richardson was selling his books for next to nothing, gladly changing the content of what he had envisioned as a Canadian national literature, to fit into an American context. Richardson no longer had any illusions about creating a Canadian identity. Of his own books he wrote that they might as well have been written "in Kamtschatka as Canada."

He also wrote the novel *Westbrook* – a dreamlike and monstrously cruel work about a rapist and murderer. In yet another doomed literary adventure, he penned a book in defence of a Bavarian prostitute, Lola Montes, who was on her way to New York and being savagely attacked by the American press. Richardson, in a quixotic and knightly gesture, paid for the publication himself and plodded from one bookseller to another in a fruitless effort to sell the book. He may have attempted to court Lola Montes as well, but she ignored him and later suffered the indignity of being tossed out of a Washington Square rooming house. The Bavarian prostitute would rebound from her troubles, but Richardson would not.

On May 12, 1852, Major John Richardson, author of *Wacousta* and as many as 10 other books, starved to death walking the streets of New York. In a story that one hopes is apocryphal, he was last seen trying to sell his dog to a little girl in an attempt to buy food. The dog's name was Hector, a reminder of days when Richardson, in his fighting prime, rambled the paths of Canada and Europe, entertaining the woman he loved with stories of his large and vigorous life. But Maria was dead, and Richardson was very much alone. Apparently his final words were addressed to his dog. "Ah my poor Hector, we must part or starve." *The Pick*, a New York paper, published his obituary and concluded simply, "such is the fate of genius."

According to records at the time, the body of Canada's first novelist was taken from the city limits and buried in an undisclosed location. The grave has never been found.

Peter Unwin is a Toronto writer. His most recent book is *The Wolf's Head: Writing Lake Superior*, published by Viking Canada.

Et Cetera

The Canadian Don Quixote: The Life and Works of Major John Richardson, Canada's First Novelist by David R. Beasley. Porcupine's Quill, Erin, Ontario, 1977.

The full text of the 1832 edition of *Wacousta* and the 1840 edition of *The Canadian Brothers* can be found online at Early Canadiana Online www.canadiana.org.

A modernized, abbreviated edition of *Wacousta* by Heather Kirk was published in 2005 by Winding Trail Press, Embrun, Ontario.

in memory of a charming evening at Government House.
Oscar Wilde
June.
82.
OSCAR WILDE.
Copyright 1882, by N. Sarony.
NEW YORK.

The Picture of Oscar Wilde

The celebrated aesthete gazed at the portrait Frances Richards had painted of him. Suddenly, he had a brilliant idea. by Carol Bishop

When Oscar Wilde was asked about the inspiration for his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, he gave a straightforward explanation to London's *Pall Mall Gazette*: "Allow me to clear up the mystery: In December 1887, I gave a sitting to a Canadian artist who was staying with some friends of hers and mine in South Kensington. When the sitting was over, and I had looked at the portrait, I said in jest, 'What a tragic thing it is. This portrait will never grow older and I shall. If only it was the other way!' The moment I had said this it occurred to me what a capital plot the idea would make for a story."

The *St. James Gazette* of Sept. 24, 1890 also reported, "We know now how 'Dorian Gray' came to be written. In 1887, about the genial season of Christmas, a Canadian lady artist yearned to transfer to the glowing canvas the classic features of Mr. Oscar Wilde. Mr. Wilde gave her a sitting."

That "Canadian lady artist" was Frances Richards who, as she stood in a South Kensington studio transferring to canvas the classic features of her friend Oscar Wilde, had come a long way from her beginnings in Brockville, Ontario. She was born there in 1852, of distinguished Loyalist stock, the daughter of Albert Norton Richards, a future lieutenant governor of British Columbia, and niece of the first chief justice of the Supreme Court, William Buell Richards. Her preordained future was to marry well (most likely to a lawyer who would become a parliamentarian) to raise a family and to preside over the teapot at social conclaves of other wives of lawyers and parliamentarians. Instead, when she stood in her London artist's studio around Christmas 1887, Frances Richards was unmarried and childless at the age of

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CORBIS

Right, 19th-century print of a scene from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde's only novel, printed in 1890.

Far right, William Buell Richards, first chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, painted by his niece, Frances Richards. The portrait was one of Frances's earliest successes.

35. She was entirely so at her own choice. She wanted to be a professional portrait artist.

Although she never openly applied the description to herself, Frances Richards was a "New Woman," one of those at the end of the 19th century prepared to put aims such as independence, self-fulfillment and self-expression ahead of being "an angel of the house." The safe matrimonial course would have come easily to her (and eventually did). Besides being socially well connected and the possessor of a modest income, Frances was exceptionally attractive, with honey-blond hair, a turned-up nose and a slim, athletic figure.

From girlhood, Frances had determined to make her way as an artist, as a professional portraitist, one who might actually earn a living from her craft rather than through her husband. Neither in Brockville nor in Ottawa, though, was there much opportunity for Frances to learn her craft. In 1877 that opportunity came when her uncle and aunt, Stephen and Susan Richards, invited the 25-year old Frances to accompany them on a grand tour of Europe. She instantly applied to the *Académie Julian* in Paris and, to her delight, was accepted as a student.

Established a decade earlier, the *Académie Julian* trained in the traditional French academic style. But unlike the more established *École des Beaux Arts*, it accepted women students. Moreover, the women students learned their exacting craft by drawing nudes, male as well as female, or at any rate, with men wearing minimalist *cache-sexes*. As an indication of her determination and of her ambition, Richards found time to also take individual instruction from several well-known teachers of portrait painting, including Carolus Duran, who also taught John Singer Sargent, and Charles Chaplin, who had earlier coached the American impressionist Mary Cassatt.

After four years in Paris, Frances returned to Ottawa to become the acting head of the newly established Ottawa School of Art, an institution that had been founded with the encouragement and financial support of the governor general, the Marquis of Lorne, and his wife, Princess Louise, a daughter of Queen Victoria, who had undertaken the challenge of raising the cultural standards of the colony. Frances's talents had impressed the vice-regal party. Soon after her return to the capital, Lorne asked Frances to paint a portrait of the Blackfoot Indian chief Po-Kah-nee-hah-pee as a present for his wife. When Princess Louise returned to England to recuperate from an accident, Lorne's sister, Frances Balfour, became official hostess at Government House. In Frances Richards, Balfour found a kindred spirit. The painter became a regular guest at state balls, dinner parties and the famed Saturday night theatrical entertainments at Rideau Hall. Balfour asked Frances to do a crayon head portrait of her husband, Eustace. After it was completed, Balfour sent a note thanking Frances for the portrait. "It will be a very pleasant reminder of Ottawa to take home."

Connections mattered a great deal to Frances, as indeed they would to every portrait painter, then or now. One of her earliest successes was a commission to paint a portrait of the first chief justice of the

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Frances Richards costumed as "The Spirit of the Press" at Governor General Lord Dufferin's ball, Rideau Hall, Feb. 23, 1876.

Frances Richards was a "New Woman," one of those prepared to put aims such as independence, self-fulfillment and self-expression ahead of being "an angel of the house."

Frances Richards Rowley in old age in her studio. She died in England in 1934 at age 82.

Supreme Court of Canada – her own uncle William Buell Richards. Demonstrating the self-promoting savvy demanded of portrait painters, Frances then asked Lady Macdonald, wife of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, to view the portrait and to help her in securing further portrait commissions. Despite Agnes Macdonald's protestations of having little influence, her patronage led to Frances painting the official portrait of the Honourable George Airey Kirkpatrick, ex-speaker of the House of Commons. Later, when Lady Macdonald settled in London, she had her own portrait done by Frances Richards.

"My dearest Jimmy – I want you to know, and to know is to delight in, Miss Richards, who is an artist and a little oasis of culture in Canada. She does really good work and has already civilized the Marquis of Lorne."

So began arguably the most important, and certainly the most encouraging, letter that Frances Richards ever received in her life. It was written in Ottawa in late May 1881 and was contained within an envelope, which in turn was stuffed into a larger envelope addressed to Frances. The letter of introduction was addressed to James Whistler, the highly regarded American painter. The author of the two letters was the best-known and most controversial writer of the day, widely and extravagantly admired but also widely detested and indeed often outright mocked. He was Oscar Wilde.

That January, Wilde had stepped off a boat in New York to start a year-long continental speaking tour by uttering his famous (and undoubtedly well-rehearsed) declaration to a customs' officer: "I have nothing to declare, except my genius." From the start, he was a huge success. Like a current day superstar, outfitted in outlandish costumes, including a black velvet doublet with puffy sleeves, ruffled collar, tight fitting breeches, black silk stockings and low-cut shoes with silver buckles, he made his audiences laugh at *and* with him. Popular songs such as the *Oscar Wilde Forget-Me-Not Waltz* and *The Flippity Flop Young Man* were written to commemorate his tour. Many of his greatest achievements, such as his plays *Salomé* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, were still ahead of him. But he was already brilliant, witty, original, scathing and daring.

One of the few immune to Wilde's outrageousness was Governor General Lorne. Suspected for his own homosexual inclinations, Lorne had no desire to be associated in any way with Wilde when he came to Ottawa in mid-May to deliver a lecture on

aesthetics. He did not invite Wilde to Rideau Hall – a striking dismissal of so distinguished a British visitor – and he did not attend the lecture. Wilde instead held court at the Russell House Hotel and called on Prime Minister Macdonald.

Somehow – no record exists to inform us of how she did it – Frances orchestrated a meeting with Wilde, most likely at the Russell House Hotel. The celebrity playwright and the colonial New Woman must have seen something of themselves in the other, perhaps their mutual ambition and determination, and their common commitment to art for art's sake. Whatever the connection, it was made.

"I send you with much pleasure a letter to Whistler, you will appreciate him and he you," wrote Wilde to Frances on his distinctive notepaper illustrated with butterflies and fish in burnished tones of gold, copper and brown. "I wish I could be in London to show you a few houses and a few men and women, but I will be in Japan, sitting under a lemon tree, drinking amber coloured tea out of a blue and white cup and contemplating a decorative landscape."

Inside this envelope was a second addressed to James Whistler, in which Wilde introduced Richards. "She is already devoted to your pictures," Wilde wrote, "or rather to my description of them which is just as good. I often think better. She is quite worthy of your blue and white china so I send her to you with this letter: I know you will be charming to her, yours Oscar."

Richards and Wilde met again in Paris half a year later. She had returned to the *Académie Julian*. He was staying at the Hotel Voltaire in a second-floor suite with a view of the Seine and the Louvre. Wilde's appearance had changed considerably since Frances had last seen him. His long, flowing hairstyle had been replaced with a Roman Nero-style bob that required an hour-long daily appointment with the hairdresser. Shunning invitations from English people visiting Paris, Wilde spent his time with artists such as Degas, Picasso and John Singer Sargent. And with Frances Richards.

In reply to a note she sent over to the Hotel Voltaire, Wilde wrote: "Dear Miss Richards, it will give me great pleasure to drink tea with you on Wednesday afternoon – I suppose at five – and to renew our acquaintance of which I have such very pleasant recollections. I am very glad your picture is accepted. I hope it is as fine a masterpiece as your notepaper is charming." Wilde was referring to a painting of Frances's that had been accepted for the 1883 Paris Salon.

Thereafter, their meeting places were in London, most often at Wilde's house on Tite Street (having married Constance Lloyd who had borne him two boys, Wilde was in the midst of his brief "domestic" period) or at the home of mutual friends, the Ross family.

Approximately four years after seeing Wilde in Paris, Frances studied her subject over the top of her easel, noting that Wilde's appearance was now considerably more conventional. A conservative side-part had replaced the rather ridiculous Nero-style hair, and he now favoured business suits with wing-tip collared shirts. Although his face had become fleshy, he had not yet acquired the unhealthy, puffy, dissipated look of later years.

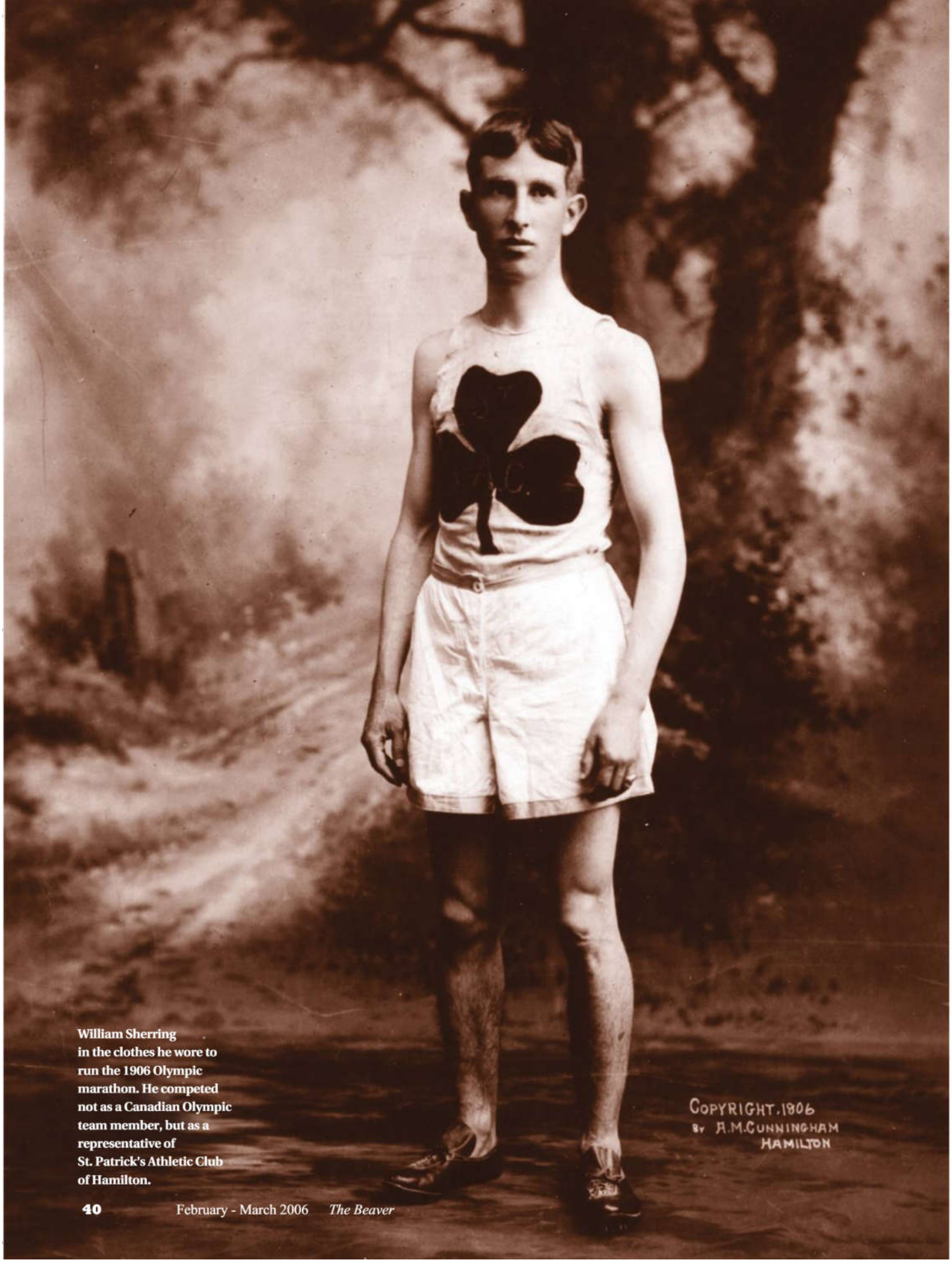
Soon after completing Wilde's portrait, Frances Richards's life was transformed. At 35, she married Edwin William Rowley, an English country gentleman with large family holdings, and joined him in his townhouse on Cheyne Walk, the epicenter of the London art world. Rowley family descendants still treasure a glass biscuit box with a silver lid said to have been a wedding present from Oscar and Constance Wilde.

Frances and Oscar Wilde remained in touch. They were mutual friends of a Canadian ex-patriot widow, Augusta Elizabeth Ross, the daughter of Robert Baldwin, the Upper Canada politician who had fought long and successfully for Responsible Government. When Augusta's husband, John, died in 1871, she and her five children moved to England. Robbie, Elizabeth's youngest, boarded for a time with Oscar and his family on Tite Street. As a teenager, Robbie Ross is thought to have been the object of Wilde's first homosexual liaison. Several accounts suggest that it was Frances Richards who first introduced the Ross family to Oscar Wilde. Having tasted the forbidden fruit, Wilde later began a relationship with Bosie Douglas, son of the Marquis of Queensberry. Livid over his son's relationship with Wilde, Queensberry was determined to bring Wilde down, with several thwarted attempts to ruin him, which eventually led to the infamous trial. Robbie Ross remained one of the few who did not abandon Wilde during his trial and subsequent prison term.

Frances, who outlived her husband (he died early, by suicide), continued as a portrait painter throughout her life, even while bringing up three children. Besides her official government portraits, her work can be found in public art galleries in Ottawa and British Columbia and in many private homes in Canada, the United States and England. She died in 1934 at the age of 82. She never broke faith with her British admirer. When Wilde was on trial through the spring of 1895 for "committing acts of gross indecency with other male persons," under the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, a photograph of him was displayed prominently and loyally in the drawing room of the Richards townhouse on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea.

As for Frances's portrait of Oscar Wilde, the inspiration for *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, no one knows what became of it.

Carol Bishop is writing a biography of three 19th-century women who left colonial Canada to win international success in their artistic fields. They mingled with major figures in the cultural and political European capitals and most significantly, all three were profoundly affected by events concerning Oscar Wilde.



William Sherring in the clothes he wore to run the 1906 Olympic marathon. He competed not as a Canadian Olympic team member, but as a representative of St. Patrick's Athletic Club of Hamilton.

Marathon MAN

A long-odds bet on a horse gave Hamilton marathoner William Sherring his fare to the 1906 Olympics. And his good fortune didn't stop there. by Jim Chliboyko

There are several ways not to win an Olympic marathon. One is to make sure you have almost no financial backing, perhaps relying on a winning racehorse to finance your trip. If you are truly determined not to win, you may wish to avoid employing any sort of trainer or coach. Even better, you should go to the foreign land where you are going to eventually race and, being broke, take on extra work on the trains to feed yourself. You may also wish to lose about 20 pounds in the weeks leading up to the race and maybe even sleep on a barn floor the night before.

When two oddly matched men ran through the Athens stadium one sweltering afternoon in May 1906, one of them had done all these things, and yet still managed to be in front.

In the famous photograph of the moment (see page 44) the man on the right was dressed as if he were heading to a royal dinner party, while the one on the left wore a simple athletic uniform, an odd oversized fedora and a shirt adorned with a great, green shamrock. Because the man was Canadian, American newspapers mistook it for a maple leaf.

He ran easily, smiled easily. An estimated 150,000 people had cheered him through the streets, now 70,000 were cheering in the stadium. He was only metres from the finish and several minutes ahead of the second-place Swedish runner. The actual race had just started a few hours before, but the man with the shamrock on his shirt had been heading for this particular finish line for years.

His name was William Sherring. The other man in the photo was Prince George of Greece, who had met him at the gates of the stadium and ran alongside until he ended the journey. It was the final day of the

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The march of athletes at the opening ceremony of the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens.

HULTON COLLECTION

1906 Olympiad, otherwise unpromisingly known as the Intercalated Games, an extra session of the Olympics set between the 1904 and 1908 games in St. Louis and London respectively. (Run in order to appease Greeks who sought a permanent home for the Olympics in Athens, and to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the birth of the modern games, the Intercalated Games were never repeated.)

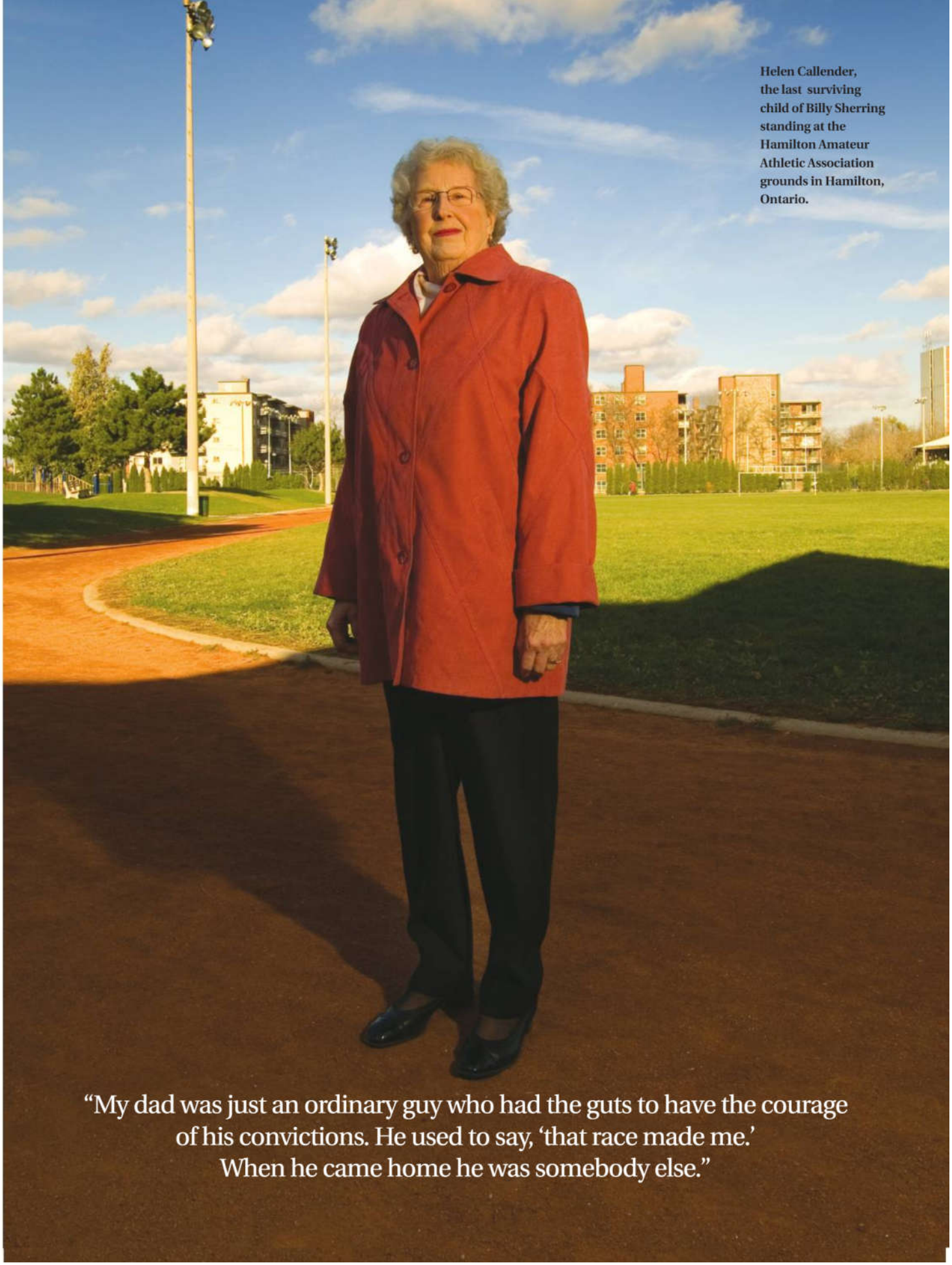
Sherring was not just any amateur athlete. He was particularly committed to his sport. He made his name competing in Hamilton's Around the Bay Road Race, usually up against one of his great rivals, Jack Caffery. During the 1900 Boston Marathon, Sherring collapsed, according to news reports, "in a semi-conscious condition on the roadside" after leading for 29 kilometres. Five men passed him, but Sherring recovered, got back on the road, and overtook four of them to finish second. The top three in Boston that year were Jack Caffery, William Sherring and Frank Hughson, remarkable because the three were not only all from Canada, they were all from Hamilton.

The determination that got Sherring to second place that day in Boston also served him well at other times. Often, too, other people were determined for him. When Sherring decided to participate in the 1906 Olympiad, how he would pay his expenses was a big question. His job as a brakeman for the Grand Trunk Railway didn't pay enough. His running club, St. Patrick's (hence the shamrock on his shirt), raised some money, but the process was slow. A bartender friend and supporter named Butch Collier got a tip about a racehorse named Cicely who looked good for a long-odds bet. Sources differ as to whether it was 15-1 odds, 12-1 or even just 6-1, but Cicely came in a winner, and the $50 bet paid enough to get Sherring into his own race.

Sherring left months early for Athens, in February 1906, before the other three members of the Canadian team, in order to better acclimatize himself and take a few quick turns on the marathon route. Forty people saw him off at the train. The horse track winnings helped, but Sherring later told the *Hamilton Spectator* that he worked as a porter and tour guide in Athens to help finance his stay.

Sherring put his time to good use. With coaches or advisors almost unheard of, Sherring had to figure out his strategy by himself. He was up against some decent runners – Italy's Dorando Pietri, France's Émile Bonheure and hometown boy Koutoulakis Anastasios, one of 26 Greeks out of 52 athletes in the race. A few friends, such as fellow Canadian Elwood Hughes, injured and unable to compete, helped Sherring prepare. During the race, Hughes scouted ahead on bicycle, returning with reports and encouragement.

GARY MULCAHEY



Helen Callender, the last surviving child of Billy Sherring standing at the Hamilton Amateur Athletic Association grounds in Hamilton, Ontario.

"My dad was just an ordinary guy who had the guts to have the courage of his convictions. He used to say, 'that race made me.' When he came home he was somebody else."

Prince George of Greece runs alongside Sherring in the Athens stadium in the final moments of the 1906 marathon. The race was run over the original course from Marathon to Athens.

TORONTO STAR ARCHIVE

The *Hamilton Spectator* reported that Sherring lost 16 pounds during the race, weighing less than 100 pounds at the finish.

The marathon was *the* event of the 1906 Games. The Toronto *Globe* reported that all shops and businesses were closed and the entire population of Athens "formed a tumultuous, swaying human barrier on each side [of] the entire length of the course." Sherring called it "a living wall." The weather was 27° C and sunny on the first day of May and the race began promptly at 3 p.m.

American William Frank took the lead for the first three-quarters of the race. Second place was traded among various runners. Daly of Ireland made his presence known after overtaking the Bohemian Bechensky. Sherring patiently hung back. He knew the course. Frank and an Australian named Blake traded the lead 20 kilometres in. But when the race hit the uphill portion, things started going Sherring's way. (Meanwhile, Pietri dropped out spitting blood. The Greeks, all 26 of them, also bowed out, later blaming the quality of food – Greek food, in the city of Marathon itself.)

Beginning the last 10 kilometres of the race, Frank was leading "but obviously distressed," reported the *Globe*. Sherring was at Frank's heels, and with Frank labouring, the Hamiltonian made his move, getting so much clearance from the rest of the pack that at times he slowed to a walk.

"Whenever he saw his opponents approaching, he resumed running, and in this manner, tired them all out except John Svanberg [a Swede] and Frank, who always were a good distance behind," reported the *Globe*. "Sherring joked and laughed with his Greek attendant and returned the salutes of the cheering crowds."

He crossed the finish line at 2 hours, 51 minutes – four minutes faster than Greek champion Spiridon Louis had run in 1896 and seven minutes faster than his nearest competitor, Svanberg. The *Hamilton Spectator* reported that Sherring lost 16 pounds during the race, weighing less than 100 pounds at the finish.

Though he was still an amateur athlete of modest means, Sherring gained an odd series of prizes along with his Olympic gold medal: a baby goat (which ended up with his Greek landlady), a statue of Athena, citizenship of Greece and of the city of Marathon and a florist's shop worth of flowers. He also received several offers of marriage.

While Sherring was no doubt a superstar at home and back in Greece, it is hard to say how his success translated internationally. The Olympics were not then the spectacle they are today. They were relegated to small write-ups in the sports section, in among the lawn bowling announcements. And in 1906 the world had been distracted only weeks before by the great San Francisco earthquake.

But Sherring certainly wasn't ignored in his hometown. Everyone was suddenly scrambling to donate money to the guy who had needed a horse to win a race so that he could compete in his own race. The *Hamilton Spectator* published a list of subscribers who gave assistance. Montreal, Hamilton and Toronto welcomed Sherring with great fanfare. Two hundred people met his train as it rolled into Montreal before 7 a.m. on May 21. Arriving in the Ontario capital, Sherring said, "I expected to receive a warm reception from my friends in Hamilton, but I did not expect this in Toronto."

Sherring rode a boat, the *Modjeska*, into Hamilton the next evening and made his way up the dock, holding the flag he had waved in Athens. He was greeted by a crowd that newspapers estimated at 40,000. "Nearly every one wore red and green ribbons or a Sherring button or a Sherring cane," reported the *Hamilton Evening Times*. There were several bands, Roman candles, limelights and "a blaze of colored lights right up to Victoria Park."

At the park, the cheering was so loud that Hamilton mayor Sanford Biggar's address could barely be heard, nor could the returning son's. Sherring was then escorted home to meet his parents before attending a banquet at St. Patrick's in his honour.

With Sherring's win, things changed for athletes. When the Canadians travelled to the 1908 London Games, Sherring, his amateur status lost because of the gifts he had received after his medal, went as head coach of the 24-member, government-sponsored track-and-field team. He was put up in London's Sussex Hotel. A lot changed for the Hamiltonian in two years.

Hamilton acknowledged Sherring's accomplishment in more permanent ways, eventually changing the name of the Around the Bay Road Race to the Billy Sherring Memorial Road Race and naming a park after him. Sherring was further rewarded with an appointment to the Department of Customs and Excise, from which he retired at 65. He passed away in 1964, two weeks before his 86th birthday and about five weeks before the start of the Tokyo Summer Olympics. The great Ethiopian runner Abebe Bikila won the marathon that year, six weeks after having his appendix removed. It was a handicap that Billy Sherring might have appreciated.

Jim Chliboyko is a Winnipeg writer who has gotten up to three kilometres in his efforts to start running again.

Some Great (and Befuddling) Moments in Canadian Winter Olympic History

The Olympic Games were held only in the summer until the introduction of the first Winter Olympic Games in 1924. Considering the country's climate, it comes as no surprise that Canada excels in so many winter events. Canada has won a gold medal in men's ice hockey seven times at the Olympic Games: 1920 (ice hockey was an official event at the 1920 Summer Olympic Games at Antwerp), 1924, 1928, 1932, 1948 and 1952. Then, after a 50-year gap, Canadian hockey reclaimed gold – twice – in 2002 at Salt Lake City, where the men's and women's teams placed first, triumphing over the United States in their final games.

Rivalling successes in its national pastime, Canadians have repeatedly stolen the show in skiing, figure skating, speed skating and biathlon events. Like the gaunt and under-funded marathoner Billy Sherring, other Canadian athletes have claimed victory under incredible

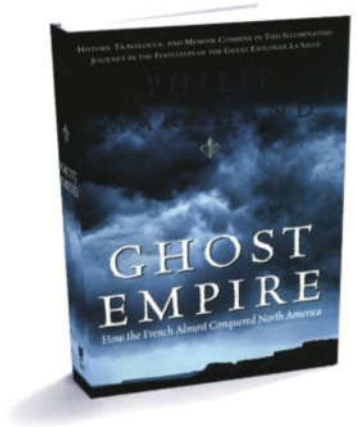
odds. During the heyday of the Crazy Canucks, who can forget Ken Read's ski binding popping off right at the start, overshadowing Steve Podborski's bronze ranking in the 1980 alpine event? Or, when biathlon hopeful Myriam Bedard (above) took home a gold medal in the 1994 games in Lillehammer – sailing through the finish line on mistakenly mismatched skis?

Jamie Salé and David Pelletier, the victims of a scandal in Olympic judging, were eventually awarded a gold medal in the Olympic Pairs figure-skating event in 2002. (This move infuriated many, as it was decided they would share gold with the Russian pair.) Another great moment for Canadians saw the 15th Winter Games hosted in and around Calgary in 1988, but the outcome of the long-anticipated "Battle of the Brians" was a disappointing denouement for figure skating fans. Orser lost to Boitano by a hair-splitting judgment, when Boitano's higher technical marks were used as a tiebreaker, trumping Orser's higher artistic marks.

Two women in the early history of the Olympics stand out at a time when men often dominated. On the slopes, one of Canada's finest moments occurred in the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble, France when Nancy Greene (right) won a gold and silver medal in ski racing, capturing the gold by one of the largest margins in Olympic history. Twenty years earlier, "Canada's sweetheart," Barbara Ann Scott, won the gold medal for figure skating in the 1948 Winter Olympics, making her the first Canadian to win gold in that event.

More great Winter Olympic moments await, as the 2010 games are to be held in Vancouver and Whistler, B.C.

Reviews



STROLLING FOR LA SALLE

Ghost Empire: How the French Almost Conquered North America
by Philip Marchand
McClelland & Stewart, 2005
456 pp., $37.99 hardcover

As school children, we all knew about René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. He was That Loser. He had paddled to the mouth of the Mississippi River, founded a doomed settlement, strayed onto the Prairies and managed to get himself murdered by the rowdy low-lifes he commanded (i.e. our ancestors).

In *Ghost Empire: How the French Almost Conquered North America*, Philip Marchand fleshes out La Salle's personality somewhat, but not much. Marchand hopscotches from Montreal to New Orleans, visiting the towns and cities along the Mississippi River where La Salle set foot. He talks to sages and crackpots, visits an inordinate number of churches and bars, "where you can sit and relax and think about your situation" and strolls through more cemeteries than must be healthy. The writing is bright, breezy, funny, often perceptive and at times touching. But it only circles around La Salle, who remains as enigmatic at the end of the book as he is at the beginning.

Ghost Empire isn't "history" so much as musings about history. Philip Marchand, a native of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is the books columnist for the *Toronto Star*. While a gifted writer, his grasp of the French language is shaky at times. But it hardly matters. Marchand's interest in New France is profoundly and passionately personal. Who were these *ancêtres* who came to the most daunting part of North America, braved the strongest native alliance on the continent, blazed a path across the West and ended up as meek, subservient mill workers in New England? Why did they lose, and what might have happened if they'd won?

Marchand wants to know. So off he goes, on a wild, raucous ride through the heart and history of the continent. A typical chapter contains the gruesome tortures of Lalemant and Brébeuf; Franco-American children discovering the perils of erotic fantasy; an oh-so-brief appearance by La Salle; the perfect lawns of suburban Toronto; a murderous flood; the massacre at Lachine; and a philosophical discourse on the licence-plate mottos of Quebec and Ontario. All of this in 11 pages.

Enjoyable books are usually open to debate, and some of Marchand's pronouncements are highly debatable. About a speech by Frontenac: "It didn't matter that the speech was mostly bullshit. No one loved bullshit more than Indians." On the state of Quebec culture: "their cultural distinctiveness is nothing to brag about – it's 'Sex in the City' with an *accent aigu*." Marchand is obviously betting that the age of political correctness has quietly slipped away.

Marchand has a habit of opening tantalizing doors and then walking away. When describing Quebec as viewed by Walt Whitman, an "extreme of grimness," the scariest place he'd ever seen, Marchand concludes: "This is a point always to be remembered about French Canadians." But what is the point?

An entertaining writer, his love of catchy phrasing can run away on him. The subtitle, *How the French Almost Conquered North America*, is a case in point. The cautious reader might object that the French never came close to conquering the continent. Well, the cautious reader can relax because Marchand himself shoots plenty of holes through the concept, pointing out, among other things, that French peasants were landholders and poor candidates for emigration, that a single fortified town on the northeast border of France meant more to Louis XIV than all of North America and that the loss of New France barely left a dent on the French.

The potential of French North America is never unveiled and neither is the cryptic personality of La Salle. Marchand is telling us we'll have to live with the uncertainty. In the summer of 1769, La Salle's men at Fort Crèvecoeur in Illinois burned the place to the ground and vanished into the wilderness. They left behind a message on a piece of wood: *Nous sommes tous sauvages*. You can interpret that as: we are all native peoples, we are all heathens, or we are all free men. Take your pick.

Reviewed by **Ronald Lavallée**, a producer with Radio-Canada in Sherbrooke, Quebec, and the author of *Tchipayuk: Or, the Way of the Wolf* (Talonbooks). It so happens that he grew up in La Salle, Manitoba.

COUNTING SHEAVES

Saskatchewan: A New History
by Bill Waiser
Fifth House, 2005
563 pp., illus., $49.95 hardcover

"Sir Wilfrid was late." These opening words of Bill Waiser's *Saskatchewan: A New History* set the stage for its easy and friendly readability. One hardly realizes this volume is actually a comprehensive, authoritative and serious history book.

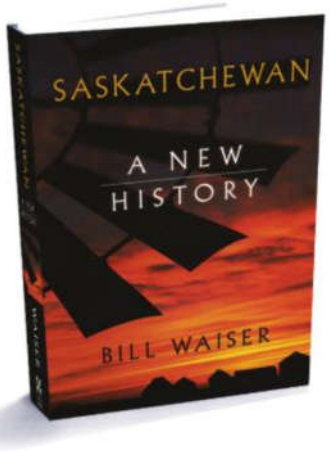
Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier had chosen to be in Edmonton and not Regina for inauguration ceremonies on the day Alberta and Saskatchewan entered the Canadian nation as prov-

inces on Sept. 1, 1905. Waiser, a specialist in western and northern Canadian history at the University of Saskatchewan, uses the opening line to introduce readers to the story of Saskatchewan's road to provincehood, "strewn with delay, acrimony, intrigue, confusion – even betrayal."

The anecdote also serves to illustrate Saskatchewan citizens' enthusiastic and resilient nature, one that would serve them well through their first century as a province. Though their inaugural celebration was delayed by three days, it was something worth waiting for, with banners and grand triumphal arches and flags gracing Regina's main street.

As a province, Saskatchewan's history officially started Sept. 1, 1905. Yet in the second chapter, Waiser delves farther back to prehistory, moving along to the First Nations and their subsequent involvement with fur traders and missionaries. He includes stories of territorial rivalries: between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company and between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. In his accessible, flowing style, Waiser reminds us that before the railway was built it was the province's northern half that contained the major east–west trade route: from Cumberland House up the Churchill River to Fort Chipewyan and the Mackenzie River.

Now, its southern farms are what tend to dominate our perception of Saskatchewan, and Waiser explores how this came to be. The prairie grasslands supported massive open-range cattle ranches such as the Empire Cattle Company and the Conrad Price Cattle Company. The cattle population exploded from 63,000 head in 1903 to 360,000 just three years later. But the winter of 1906 was to change the use of the landscape forever. A brutal November blizzard followed by months of record heavy snowfalls and Arctic temperatures killed thousands of cattle. The cattle companies gave up their leases, freeing the land for homesteaders who arrived in droves. Enthusiastically promoted by Ottawa, agriculture became the new creed: from 1906 to 1911, three out of every five homesteaders headed to Saskatchewan. There was no looking back – farms became the heart and soul of the



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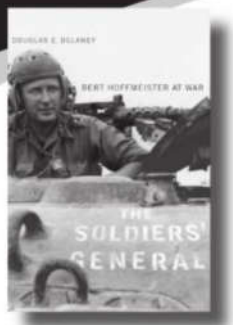

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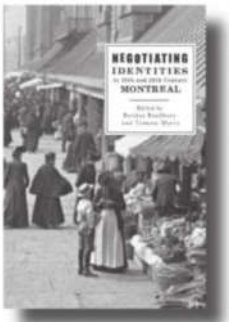

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Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers, eds.

328 pp. • 0-7748-1198-6 • pb $29.95

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Reviews

land. From 1911 to 1941, Saskatchewan was the third-most populous province in Canada, and its significant wheat production became known around the world.

From the land to the people occupying the land, Waiser focuses on another Saskatchewan symbol, Tommy Douglas, who served as the province's premier from 1944 to 1961. His crowning achievement for Canada, the 1947 introduction of the nation's first universal hospital insurance system, was eventually adopted federally. An unstoppable political force, he is known as the "Father of Medicare." As it is with Tommy Douglas, Saskatchewan's history is rife with innovators. Waiser's exemplary history text turns over every stone and misses no details in finding them.

Waiser looks ahead to the next century at circumstances that "threaten to push and pull the province in different directions." Firstly, massive loss of agricultural jobs, which once numbered in the hundreds of thousands and now represent just five percent of the population, are forcing youth to leave, resulting in the mass exodus of those best qualified to lead the province forward. With aboriginals making up almost one in eight residents, Waiser claims that the most critical issue for Saskatchewan in the new century will be defining the "role and place of the growing aboriginal population." Although Waiser sees no ready answers, he asserts that the people of Saskatchewan are already responding "to these many challenges in their typical resourceful fashion."

No dignitaries were late for the Regina celebrations 100 years later; the Queen arrived on time. In time, in fact, to be presented with an advance copy of Waiser's book. Hopefully it will occupy a prime spot in her reading room – just as it should in every Canadian history buff's library.

Reviewed by **Graham Chandler**, a Calgary-based writer with a PhD in archaeology.

MORE BOOKS

The Great Dominion: Winston Churchill in Canada 1900–1954
by David Dilks
Thomas Allen Publishers, Toronto, 2005
472 pp., illus., $45 hardcover

Winston liked us. He really liked us. The winner of the BBC's Greatest Briton contest, Winston Churchill visited Canada nine times between 1900 and 1954, more than any other Commonwealth country. British historian David Dilks, head of the Canadian Studies Centre at Leeds University, has trawled letters, diaries, government papers, memoirs, speeches and newspaper accounts to show that the British soldier, journalist, politician and prime minister wasn't just skipping through on his way to the United States. Churchill heard the news of Queen Victoria's death in Winnipeg. He powwowed with Roosevelt in Quebec. And he suffered photogra-

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The Germans perched "Kurt" on a Labrador hill. The automated weatherman wasn't found for 40 years.
BY ANDRÉ PELCHAT

pher Yousuf Karsh snatching the cigar from his mouth in Ottawa. Along the way, he attracted huge audiences, generated miles of press accounts, and moved the sober William Lyon Mackenzie King to loosen up and have a drink. In the late 1920s when Churchill's career was at low ebb, he even contemplated the idea of moving here. Wherever possible in this account Dilks gives preference to Churchill's own voice. And what a voice it was – intelligent, humorous and rich with ideas. If only some of today's politicians were as readable.

Double Trap: The Last Public Hanging in Canada
by John Melady
Dundern, Toronto, 2005
247 pp., illus., $24.99 paper

Dedicated *Beaver* readers will know that the who, where and when of the last public hanging in Canada is contentious. Patrick James Whelan, the assassin of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, executed in Ottawa Feb. 11, 1869, often gets the nod. Some have suggested either racism or Central Canadian preoccupation prevents acknowledgment of the eight aboriginal men hanged for their participation in the 1885 Frog Lake Massacre in what would become Saskatchewan. Author John Melady argues for his ancestor Nicholas Melady, executed in Goderich Dec. 7, 1869 for the murder of his father and stepmother – 10 months after Whelan and three weeks before a new government order banning executions in public took effect. In this page-turner, John Melady recounts the circumstances of the double murder, recreates the atmosphere of gossipy small-town Ontario and introduces us to the woman who would entrap Nicholas and lead him to the gallows. Thousands were drawn to Goderich for the execution, but due to a last-minute time change, only a few hundred witnessed the death of the man who would become, at the very least, the last Euro-Canadian publicly hanged in Canada.

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Christopher Moore

Confronting the Dragons

While Canada redresses its treatment of Chinese Canadians, historians have yet to match with their writings the richness of the Chinese experience in Canada.

I'm a historian; I don't do the future. But recently it's been hard to miss the vision of the next century that has been dominating the news: the rise of China as the new power for the 21st century.

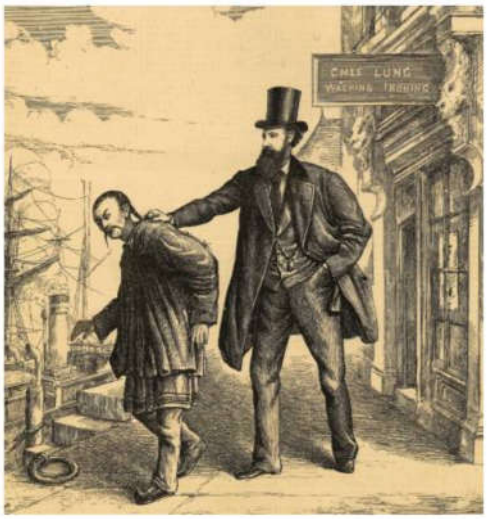
Commentators observe with fascination the construction cranes on ancient Chinese skylines. They chart the relentless export growth of Chinese industry and its growing demand for resources and oil. If the commentators are Canadian, they also worry about what that Asian future means for Canada. Can Canada compete? Where will Canada fit in China's world? Can our fast-growing and enterprising Chinese-Canadian communities help this country find openings to China?

That mix of fascination and foreboding has typified Canada's view of China for a very long time. Recently I spent some time reading about the mixed feelings with which Canadians viewed China and the Chinese 120 years ago.

It's no coincidence that 1885, the year the transcontinental railway was completed, also saw the introduction of the infamous head tax on Chinese – and only Chinese – immigrants. While the CPR was being built in the 1880s, Chinese immigrants became the fastest-growing segment of the West Coast population. By 1885, there may have been 15,000 Chinese in British Columbia, compared to perhaps 40,000 Europeans and 25,000 aboriginal Canadians.

For years, British Columbia politicians had been expressing fear about the threat they perceived in Chinese immigration. The imminent completion of the CPR and the drop in demand for immigrant labourers made the matter a national issue. In 1885 the Canadian parliament passed two related measures. One imposed a tax on all Chinese entering Canada. The second deprived Chinese in Canada of the vote.

Even in 1885, there was some appreciation of the actual and potential Chinese contribution to Canada, some ambivalence about what Canada was doing. Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau, the former Quebec premier who as Canadian secretary of state introduced the head-tax bill, acknowledged that racial limits on immigration abrogated a long tradition that "British soil was open to any member of the human family." Chapleau saluted the contributions Chinese immigrants had already made to Canada and denied that they brought disease or caused trouble. Opposition to them, he said, had no other cause "than the competition of cheap labour with labourers who want to exact a higher price." Some MPs criticized Chapleau for moving a bill and attacking it at the same time.



The Heathen Chinee in British Columbia by James L. Weston, printed April 26, 1879. The drawing shows Amor de Cosmos, B.C. premier from 1872 to 1874, who, reflecting the sentiments of the day, believed Chinese were a threat to white society because they could not or would not assimilate.

Nevertheless, Chapleau went on, "it is a natural and well-founded desire of the white population of this Dominion … that their country should be spoken of abroad as being inhabited by a vigorous energetic white race of people." His plan to choke off Chinese immigration with a $50 per-person tax passed by a voice vote without any recorded opposition. (The tax amount would be about $900 in today's money.)

The federal law that deprived Chinese of the vote also passed, but here and there doubts about its legitimacy were aired. The Prince Edward Island MP Louis Henry Davies (a future chief justice of Canada) said robustly in Parliament that "a Chinaman who has become a British subject by naturalization, who resides in this country and has acquired the necessary qualification, has as good a right to be allowed to vote as any other British subject of foreign extraction." No one denied the principle. But the bill passed.

Such mixed feelings about the anti-Chinese laws also existed outside Parliament. Toronto's *Globe* newspaper reported the deaths of Chinese trying to smuggle themselves across the American border. It also investigated the plight of an Englishman arriving at Victoria with his Chinese wife and six Anglo-Chinese children, "all fluent in English and following the customs of their father's native land." Could the new law really override the settled legal principles that husband and wife were as one and that children take the father's nationality? Yes. The tax law obliged the family to pay $350 (roughly $6,300 in 2006 values) upon entry.

MCCORD MUSEUM

Many of those who questioned the new restrictions were not really trying to get rid of the new laws. (The *Globe* supported limits on Chinese immigration.) Perhaps the most striking evidence that even in 1885 there was some awareness of the potential of China appeared in a separate newspaper feature. On Nov. 9, 1885, as part of its coverage of the previous day's last spike ceremony at Craigellachie, B.C., the *Globe* noted that Canada was not the only part of the world being girdled with railways. European colonizers were busy laying rails and building factories in China, it said. It predicted that the same prosperity that railways and industry were bringing to Canada was destined to blossom in China.

As railroads and industry transformed China, said the paper, "the laborious, sober, ingenious Chinese will become penetrated with modern industrial civilization, and then Chinese will not need to emigrate. They will have but to stay home and manufacture for export, and manufacture on such terms as Europeans and American workmen could not even look at." The *Globe* of 1885 was predicting what the *Globe and Mail* of 2005 predicts: the imminent rise of the Chinese economic colossus.

Late in 2005, the Canadian government's proposals to acknowledge the anti-Chinese tax and other historical wrongs endured a controversial launch. The crassly political pre-election announcement was part of the problem. But the Chinese-Canadian community was divided about the form redress should take. Should acknowledgment without apology suffice? Was financial restitution required? Several Chinese-Canadian organizations debated these issues and who should speak on them.

In any historical redress, what's most important is memory. The past cannot be fixed, but it can be confronted and acknowledged. Our historians, perhaps, still have a way to go in that regard. We can find the facts, as well as significant documentations of injustices, in James Morton's older work *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, Peter Ward's *White Canada Forever* and *From China to Canada*, a collective work directed by Edgar Wickberg of the University of British Columbia. But Canadian literature has done rather better. I think of Denise Chong's *The Concubine's Children*, Wayson Choy's *Jade Peony*, Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café*, Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill* and the young-adult novels of Paul Yee.

Considering that list, there has hardly yet been a historical work matching in scale and ambition the full richness and complexity of the Chinese experience in Canada, the good with the bad, the most alien and the most assimilated, the early gold miners and the recent entrepreneurs. The historians still have some progress to make.

Historian and writer Christopher Moore comments in every issue of *The Beaver*.

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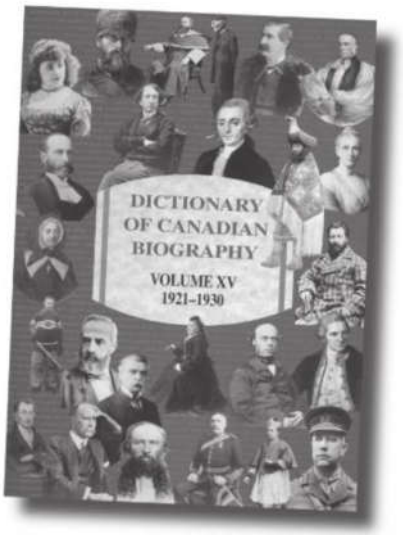

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Getaway

THOMAS FRICKE

St Alban's built near Wawanesa, Man., in 1906 by the Criddle/Vane family, and today a Manitoba provincial heritage site.

Pioneer Spirit

The promise of prosperity lured multitudes to Manitoba's vast, unbroken prairie. As Jean Tullett Read discovers, the men and women who successfully settled the land were tenacious and hardworking – and sometimes a little unconventional.

Manitoba's immigration boom at the turn of the last century began with a slick advertising campaign. Spilling from pages of government pamphlets and posters were illustrations of buxom women clutching sheaves of golden wheat, idyllic scenes of farm life and lyrical descriptions of bountiful harvests. Offered 160 acres of land for $10 and a guarantee of three years' residence and cultivation, settlers rushed to the prairies. Manitoba's population mushroomed to 461,394 in 1911 from 25,228 in 1871.

Contrasting the propaganda was the reality of settling the West – the cold winter, the dryness, the isolation. One way to understand the courage and independent spirit of Manitoba's pioneer farmers is to travel Highway 2 between Winnipeg and Brandon and visit some of the sites that evoke their substance and mettle. Such a weekend getaway might begin at the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg. A tongue-in-cheek video, part of the recently opened Parklands/Mixed Woods Gallery, reveals how the threat of American annexation fueled the rush to populate the Prairies. The gallery features a diorama of Ukrainian immigrants harvesting rye on a hot summer's day that's so realistic you almost feel the heat of the sun. With a display of watercolour paintings, field notes, birds' eggs and hand-carved boxes, the gallery also introduces history lovers to the Criddles, homesteaders in southwestern Manitoba in 1882; this family of naturalists made detailed records of prairie flora and fauna.

JEAN TULLETT READ

Daly House Museum, the former home of Brandon mayor Thomas Mayne Daly II, built in 1882.

Travel 115 kilometres west of Winnipeg along Highway 2 to Treherne, where Almon James Cotton farmed. In 1899 he became known as Manitoba's "wheat king" when his grain harvest filled 28 rail cars. Cotton was a Manitoba booster, writing persuasive letters to other immigrants. His message was simple: come west, roll up your sleeves and work, and you will prosper. A time-

line in the Treherne Museum shows the town's growth as Cotton and other immigrants established farms in the area. The museum has a furnished pioneer home, a working blacksmith shop and an engaging mix of pioneer artifacts from household items to farm equipment, as well as an extensive gun collection.

JEAN TULLETT READ

Antique threshing machine on display at Treherne Museum.

Drive west from Treherne along Highway 2, turn north at PR 88, and continue 55 kilometres until you come to Stockton. The ferry at Stockton, in operation since 1887 and the last of its type in Manitoba, still transports people and goods across the Assiniboine River, though it's not as vital as it was when it was the only way to haul settlers' goods and grain to the railway. In earlier days, the crossing was also a place to gossip and swap news and a location for dances and parties.

Continue 18 kilometres west to Wawanesa, where the impact of the Criddle family in the province is most evident. Incorporating some artifacts related to suffragette Nellie (Mooney) McClung, whose family homesteaded nearby, Wawanesa's Sipiweske Museum portrays early pioneer life in southwestern Manitoba. It contains a room full of Criddle artifacts that offer a peek into their lives: calling and dance cards, family photographs and records and a dress belonging to Alice Criddle, wife of Percy, who emigrated from England with their four children, and with Elise Vane and her five children by Percy, to create an unconventional pioneering family. On the Sipiweske Museum grounds is a jewel of a prairie church, St. John the Divine, built in 1882 by English settlers, one of the oldest Anglican churches in Manitoba. Reflecting High Victorian design with its neo-Gothic windows, the interior's barrel-vault ceiling, ornate wood-burning stove and many original furnishings has little changed in 124 years.

Seventeen kilometres northeast of Wawanesa is the Criddle/Vane homestead, now a provincial heritage park. It includes the remaining structure of western Canada's first entomological field station, run by Percy's son Norman Criddle, Manitoba's first provincial entomologist. Two self-guiding interpretive trails (.8 and 1.4 kilometres long) take you past the house, the field station and the family's private golf course tennis court and cemetery. Dominating the site is St. Albans, the family's second house, built in 1906.

The final stop is the Daly House Museum in Brandon, 43 kilometres northwest of the Criddle homestead. Built in 1882 for Stratford, Ont., émigré Thomas Mayne Daly II, Brandon's first mayor, it's a fine example of a late 19th-century, upper-middle-class home, complete with a kitchen, parlour, bedrooms and dining rooms. Struggle was not the lot of all who came to the Prairies in the boom years of the late 1800s.

Jean Tullett Read is a Winnipeg writer.

If you go ...

From Winnipeg to Brandon, Manitoba, via Treherne and Wawanesa is a distance of 200 kilometres, accessible by Highways 2 and 10. For information on places to see, accommodations and special events, contact:

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T: 204-824-2289

Criddle/Vane Homestead Heritage Committee
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Glenboro, MB R0K 0X0
T: 204-827-2133
E:criddle_vane_homestead@yahoo.ca
W: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks/popular_parks/criddle_vane/info.html

Daly House Museum
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E: dalymus@mb.sympatico.ca
W: www.mts.net/~dalymus

DAWN HUCK

Your Story

Fur Trade Letters

Don Macdougall reflects on his family connection to the early Canadian fur trade.

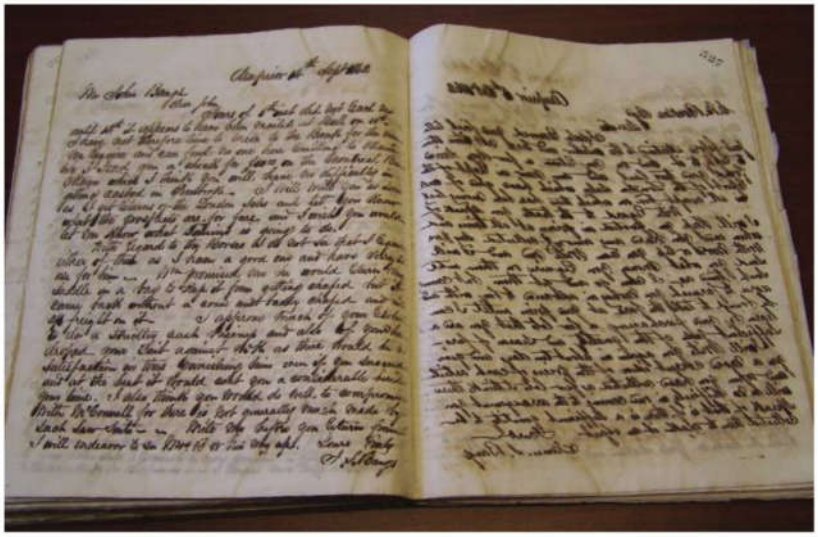
The handwritten letters of my great-great-grandfather, independent fur trader James S. Bangs, open a window to the fur trade and mercantile business in eastern Ontario during the mid-1800s.

I found the 545 letters quite by chance. Wandering into the Stauffer Library at Kingston's Queen's University during a conference, I typed "Bangs" into the catalogue and was astounded to find the name James S. Bangs listed in the archives.

A few scattered visits over the years demonstrated how difficult and time-consuming it would be to uncover the contents. Fortunately, my daughter Heather's two free months before a university course led to the real project. We arranged with the Queen's and National Archives archivists to transfer the two copybooks to Ottawa – a rare event in the archive world, I learned – and my daughter (with a little paternal help) painstakingly typed these handwritten onion-skinned letters into a computer.

One night, during a break from this intense work at Ottawa's National Archives, I found two more letters on the database. Seven Algonquin chiefs had written them to Bangs, asking him for assistance. What a bonus!

Bangs was between 29 and 36 when he wrote the letters between 1855 and 1862, usually to order items and make payments for supplies, record fur-gathering trips and report to partners in the fur-trade business. They were probably copied and retained as business records; seldom does Bangs's personal life intrude. We learn very little about his marriage or his children. There was one oblique reference to a family tragedy – intrigued, we dug deeper, found a different source and learned that his sister-in-law and her husband, Joseph Currier, lost three children to scarlet fever. (Currier later built the house at Ottawa's 24 Sussex Drive.)



COURTESY DON MACDOUGALL

In addition to writing hundreds of letters, 19th-century fur trader James S. Bangs maintained copybooks to record his business transactions. Special inks, treated paper and a screw press were used to make mirror copies of original entries.

Copybooks contain specially treated tissue paper. The original letter would be written on a separate sheet of paper using copy ink, which was then positioned behind a dampened tissue page in the book. Sheets of oiled paper were placed on either side to protect the adjacent tissues from the damp paper. After the paper was inserted, the whole book was closed and placed in a screw press to compact it and allow the ink to produce a mirror copy of the letter on the treated paper. James Watt, famous for his steam engine, had patented the process in 1780 and Benjamin Franklin was the first American to possess a copybook kit.

James S. Bangs and his nephew John worked the Ottawa and Madawaska Rivers, building up an extensive native trade stretching from Penetanguishene to Temiscaming. They faced strong opposition from the Hudson's Bay Company when they established a trading camp at Lake Temiscaming. Bangs described one confrontation in a letter to George Brown's Toronto *Globe*, reporting that "[the HBC] were Spending about two thousand pounds a year to watch and oppose us and Still we got the furs from under their closest watch." He finally "saw plainly that it was necessary to close up the Temisg Trade for it was not possible for us to compete with the immence opposition which the H.B.Co. brot to bear upon us." Bangs's invasion of the HBC territory resulted in the first customs officers being dispatched to Temiscaming in 1858 after he claimed that the HBC was importing furs from Moose Factory without paying duties. Bangs continued to trade with native suppliers in other areas, although his nephew was enticed to work for the HBC at Mattawa, where he also became postmaster.

In August 1862 Bangs wrote to his financiers and buyers in England that he had travelled:

> Sometimes two hundred miles back in the woods threading my way on snow-shoes through the trackless forest from one Indian camp to an other and at others dashing down the Rapid

streams in a small birch canoe which to you would look more like a childs Toy than an article for voyaging in … [in] the interior … thousands of Indians never see any other traders than the Hudsons Bay Co man [and market prices] are little known.

Bangs mainly sold his prime furs to Freeman Dodd, a "house" located in New York City, and to James Coates and M. Lampson of Tokenhouse Yard, London, England. It appears from his letters that Bangs travelled to New York a number of times and at least once to London. For his direct purchases from native peoples, he often traded gold beads (which seemed very difficult for him to obtain), cloth and other items.

Interestingly, Bangs obtained traps for his fur suppliers. These he got from Oneida Castle, a small village in central New York, where a "free-love" commune had begun to manufacture guns and traps in the early 1800s. (The business has since become Woodstream Canada, maker of animal traps, large and small.) Bangs quickly learned of their reputation and visited them to assist with trap designs. He later sent detailed diagrams for additional modifications, explaining, "while some of my customers are satisfied with them many (particularly the Indians in the interior) object to them and take the Montreal made (though inferior in many other Respects)."

Our history is not always one of great men and heroes, but of work done by those who have left their own small mark. James S. Bangs was born at Hawkesbury, Ontario in 1826, the son of Benjamin Bangs, a hatter by trade who was born in Massachusetts in 1780. The Bangs family had arrived in Massachusetts on the second pilgrim ship after the *Mayflower*. One of his brothers was an Ottawa alderman for nine years and eventually became mayor in 1878.

My daughter and I physically touched our family heritage and felt we had the chance to know James S. Bangs through his letters. His smooth, cursive writing, competent grammar and wide vocabulary belied his lack of education and showed a man striving to succeed. We came upon interesting words and phrases from the 1800s: *firkin* (small cask for butter), *lenity* (mercifulness, used to humbly thank his creditors), *prox* (next month), *ult* (last month) and *high wines* (adulterated liquor). (Readers might help us with one of the mysteries: the meaning of the superscripted word "to" that is used only on numbers relating to beavers.) Bangs signed off each and every letter with "Your humble servant" or "Your most obedient servant."

The *Perth Courier* reported the suspicious circumstances of my great-great grandfather's death in April 1867. Apparently, it was common knowledge that he often carried a large sum of money. He drowned in the Snake Rapids of the Madawaska River, fur trading to the end.

Don Macdougall is a lawyer who lives in Ottawa.

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Founded in 1994 to popularize Canadian history, the work of Canada's National History Society includes **The Beaver**, the **Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History** to honour the country's best history teachers, and the **Pierre Berton Award** to recognize those who have brought history to a wider audience.

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The Beaver was founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay Company, whose commitment to the History Society and its programs continues today through the ***Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation***.

Celebrating Canada's Storytellers

COURTESY OF RIDEAU HALL

Governor General's Award-winning teachers at Rideau Hall, Nov. 29, 2005. Front row (left to right): Linda-Rae Carson; CNHS President and CEO Deborah Morrison; Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada; His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond; CNHS board chair James Arnett; Jean-François Bélanger. Back row (left to right): Loretta Stabler; Patti Thorne; Paul Gifford; Caroline Ricard; Valerie Rivard; Sheila Hetherington; Jerry Berridge.

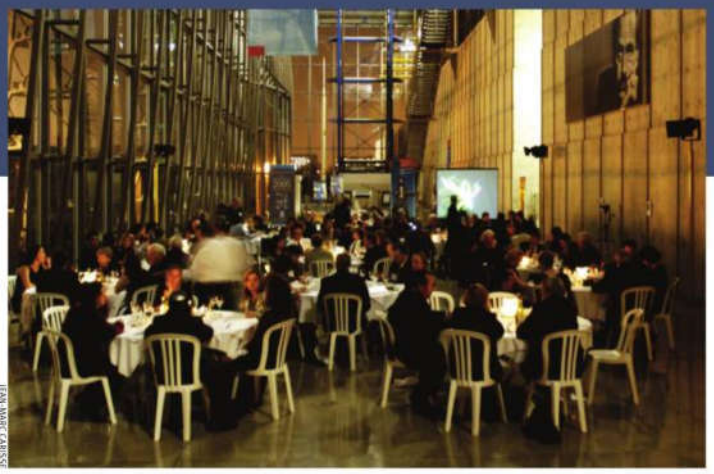
As many long-time *Beaver* readers may have noted, the History Society has developed over its first decade a series of national awards to honour excellence in bringing Canada's past to life. The Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History recognize innovation in the classroom. The Pierre Berton Award honours efforts in popular media such as print, radio, television, new media and theatre.

These awards have grown to become Canada's top history honours. Each fall, the History Society organizes a series of events across the country to present these awards. For the History Society, 2005 was a year of "firsts."

We were delighted to host a series of events for the first time in Calgary and Edmonton and to pay a special tribute to popular Alberta historian and long-time editor of *Alberta History*, Dr. Hugh Dempsey.

For the Love of History, a book featuring the favorite stories of Canada's best writers of popular Canadian history, was launched as a special tribute to Pierre Berton on the 10th anniversary of the awards given in his name.

Most notably, the Governor General's Awards, presented for the first time by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, on Nov. 29, provided our nine honourees with a chance of a lifetime to witness history-in-the-making as the prime minister's visit to Rideau Hall to seek Parliament's dissolution delayed the ceremonies by 45 minutes.



JEAN-MARC CARISSE

A special gala dinner for the recipients of the Governor General's Award was held at the Gatineau Preservation Facility of Library and Archives Canada in Gatineau, Quebec. Before dinner, recipients and guests were given a tour of the national treasures inside the facility's vaults.

JEAN-MARC CARISSE

Deborah Morrison (far right) presents Edmonton teacher Linda-Rae Carson with her award with CNHS board members Fernand Harvey and Joanne Burgess in attendance.

JEAN-MARC CARISSE

HBC History Foundation chairman Peter Mills (left) presents past GG Award winner Deanna Millard with a HBC point blanket for winning the evening's "History for Dummies" quiz.

SHEILA HETHERINGTON

Sheila Hetherington captured this shot of Paul Martin confirming the 2006 election at Rideau Hall just minutes before the awards presentation.

DEBORAH MORRISON

The Governor General's Award-winning recipients with retired general Roméo Dallaire (centre), who stopped in on their luncheon at the Parliamentary Restaurant.

LYNN HILLS

Senator David Smith provided an insider's tour of Parliament Hill. Here, recipients take a rest from the tour in the Senate Chamber.

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CANADA'S HISTORY SOCIETY

Pierre Berton Gala Dinner

DEBORAH MORRISON

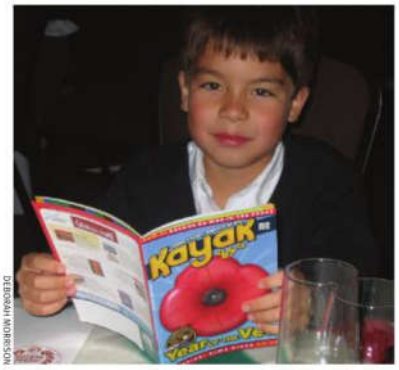
Pierre Berton Award winner Will Ferguson and his son Alex pose with a group of graduate students attending the Association for Canadian Studies National History Conference in Edmonton, Oct. 29, 2005.

DEBORAH MORRISON

CNHS staff Linda Onofreyhuck, Tanja Hütter and Catherine Burns at the National History Conference.

TANJA HUTTER

Will Ferguson signs his book *Canadian History for Dummies.*



DEBORAH MORRISON

Alex Ferguson with a copy of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids.*

TANJA HUTTER

Philippe Mailhot, executive director of the Saint-Boniface Museum, with CNHS board members Mark Starowicz and Charlotte Gray.

TANJA HUTTER

Mark Starowicz and 2005 Pierre Berton Award winner Will Ferguson.

TANJA HUTTER

Participants at the gala dinner enjoy the humour of National Librarian and Archivist Ian Wilson.

TANJA HUTTER

Beaver editor Murdoch Davis in Pierre Berton-style neckwear – The Beaver Bowtie.

Lougheed House

MURDOCH DAVIS

Peter Lougheed (left) and CNHS board president James Arnett (right) present Dr. Hugh Dempsey with a special centenary award for his outstanding contributions to Alberta history.

DEBORAH MORRISON

Charlotte Gray and Will Ferguson sign copies at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Calgary of *For the Love of History*, an anthology by past winners of the Pierre Berton Award.

SID RICHARDSON

Remembrance Day

In other events last fall, World War II veteran George Waters talks about the importance of Remembrance Day with Grade 5 students at Laura Secord School in Winnipeg.

Thunder Cape - Lake Superior by H. Keith Bowey *(Egg Tempera)*

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MUSEUM PROFILE

The Manitoba Museum

The Manitoba Museum, Manitoba's largest attraction, features an ever-changing variety of touring and specialty exhibits, as well as nine permanent galleries. All regions of Manitoba are represented, including the grasslands, the boreal forest, and the Arctic/Subarctic, where a magnificent polar bear waits under the Northern Lights for daylight to break.

The newest additions to the museum are the Hudson's Bay Company Gallery and the Parklands/Mixed Woods Gallery, the latter of which was named one of Canada's best new attractions for summer 2004 by *Where* magazine.

The Manitoba Museum is noted for its dramatic walk-through settings, including the *Nonsuch*, a 17th-century full-size replica ship, the Urban Gallery, a trip back through time to the Roaring '20s, as well as its Science Gallery and Planetarium.

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A discount of at least 10 percent on regular admissions will be given upon presentation of your membership card. Some restrictions may apply. All subscribers to *The Beaver* are automatically members of the Society.

Album

Laura Elmhurst, who submitted this photograph to *The Beaver*, is a niece by marriage of Caroline and Jane (Elmhurst) Lancaster. She lives in Hastings, Ontario, on farm property once held by the Lancaster family.

Harness shop

Around the turn of the last century, two Elmhurst girls, Caroline and Jane, married two Lancaster boys, George and John. Lured by a sense of adventure and the opportunities the West presented, they left Peterborough County, Ontario, and lit out for Alberta. Jane (known as Jennie), the younger bride, was musically inclined and an avid horsewoman. No sidesaddle for her. Perhaps this is why, many years later, this picture of a harness shop in Pincher Creek, Alberta, was found at the bottom of a trunk that came into the hands of her family in Ontario. Caroline, her husband and her brother-in-law returned to Peterborough in 1909 after six years in Alberta. Perhaps the West no longer seemed an adventure or frontier farming was more difficult than imagined; more likely, grief and disappointment drove them home. That year Jane died of tuberculosis, age 26. Her sister brought her body back to Ontario and buried her near Peterborough at Westwood Cemetery.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Or email your submission to album@thebeaver.ca. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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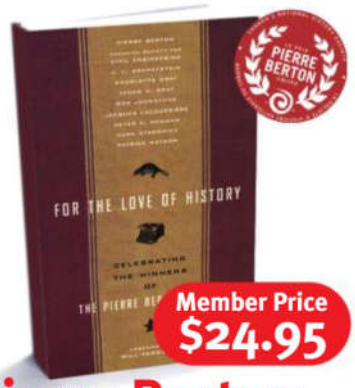

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Pierre Berton Award Winner

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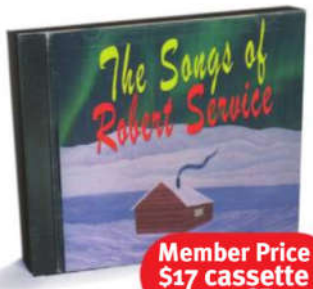

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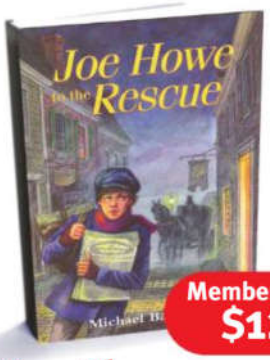

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